CHILD LIFE

EDITED BY

J. G. WHITTIER

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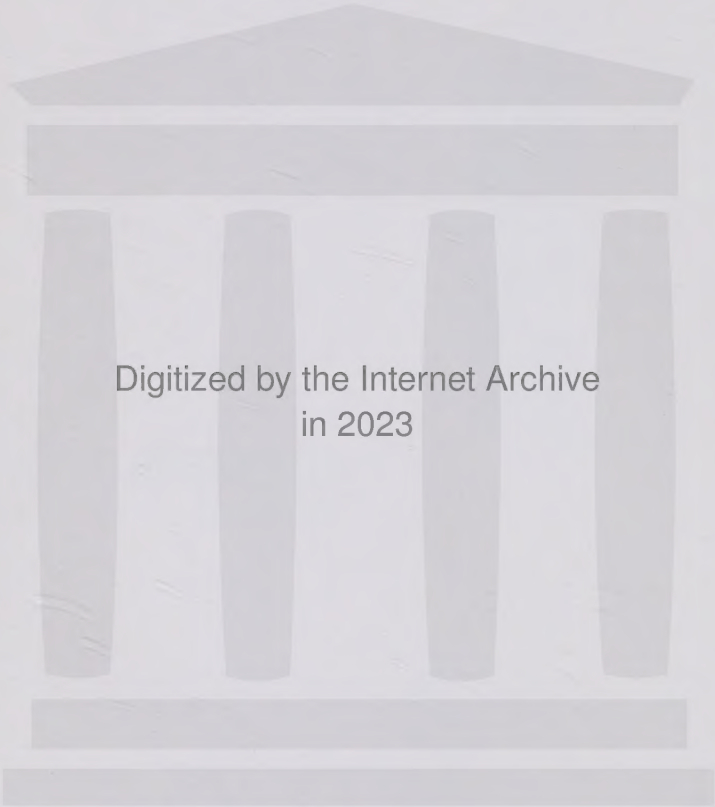

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CHILD LIFE.

CHILD LIFE:

A COLLECTION OF POEMS,

EDITED BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BOSTON:
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY.
The Riverside Press, Cambridge.

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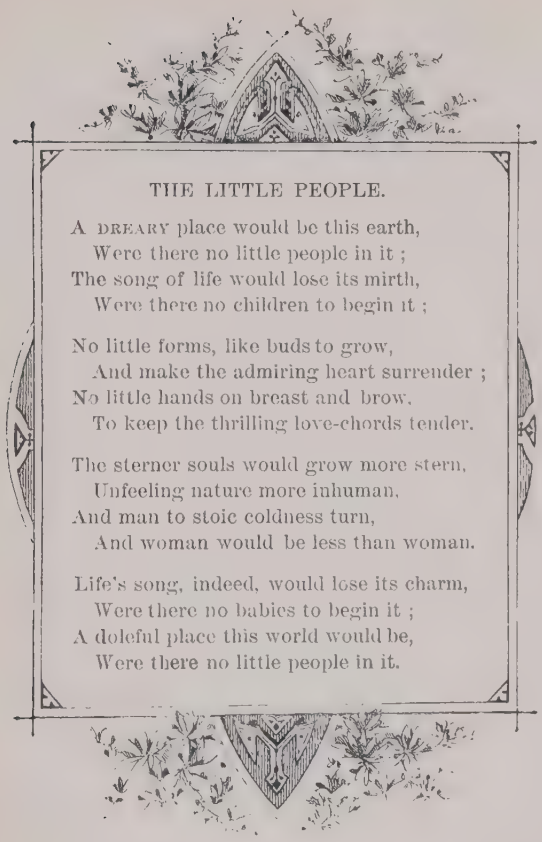

THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

A DREARY place would be this earth,
  Were there no little people in it ;
The song of life would lose its mirth,
  Were there no children to begin it ;

No little forms, like buds to grow,
  And make the admiring heart surrender ;
No little hands on breast and brow,
  To keep the thrilling love-chords tender.

The sterner souls would grow more stern,
  Unfeeling nature more inhuman,
And man to stoic coldness turn,
  And woman would be less than woman.

Life's song, indeed, would lose its charm,
  Were there no babies to begin it ;
A doleful place this world would be,
  Were there no little people in it.

PREFACE.

HAVING had occasion, some time since, to look over several volumes of selected verse intended for juvenile readers, and noticing in nearly all of them much that seemed lacking in literary merit or adaptation, it occurred to the compiler of this volume that, taking advantage of the merits as well as deficiencies of existing publications in this department, a selection might be made combining simplicity with a certain degree of literary excellence, without on the one hand descending to silliness, or, on the other rising above the average comprehension of childhood.

How far the present volume has made this thought a reality it is not for him to decide. He can only say that it is the result of a patient examination of the accessible juvenile literature of our own and other countries. Our English tongue is peculiarly rich in the lore of home and fireside; and the editor has availed himself of selections from the folk-songs and ballads of continental Europe. Where a doubt existed in regard to any particular poem he has not hesitated to take counsel of those whose judgment seemed to him reliable; and, in more than one instance, he has deferred to the instinctive and natural criticisms of childhood.

It is but just to acknowledge his obligations to kind friends whose valuable suggestions have materially aided him; and, in an especial manner, his indebtedness to LUCY LARCOM, so well known in connexion with "OUR YOUNG FOLKS," who has given him the benefit of her cultivated taste and very thorough acquaintance with whatever is valuable in the poetical literature of Child-Life.

Doubtless all readers will miss some favorite pieces which the necessity of giving as great a variety as possible to the compilation compelled him to pass over. He trusts, however, that a very large proportion of all that is permanently valuable will be found in these pages. He hopes and believes that no well-grounded exceptions can be taken to the character of the selections in a moral and religious point of view. He has endeavored, avoiding everything like cant and sectarianism, to find expression for the reverence, love, and grateful trust, so natural and beautiful in those whom the Divine Teacher held up as examples to His disciples: "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven." The deep significance of His language is confirmed by the spiritual experience of all ages.

"The paths that lead us to God's throne
Are worn by children's feet."

In the department of hymns and strictly devotional pieces, the number which seemed really appropriate in language and thought proved, on examination, to be much smaller than was anticipated. Something more perhaps might have been added from Watts and Jane Taylor, but the one beautiful hymn of Faber, with which the volume closes, contains in itself the substance and spirit of all.

Of course, fancy and imagination must play a prominent part in such a compilation, as they do in all healthful young minds, but the editor trusts that little will be found which can, by any possibility, leave an impression of evil, or really confuse the distinctions of truth and error. Even pure nonsense, as in the case of Lear's "Owl and Pussy Cat," may not be without a certain moral value as a fitting caricature of the affectation of sentiment. In Hauff's "Fortunes of Fairy-Lore," the heroine complains, to her mother Fancy, that the world has grown uncomfortably wise, and that the very children who used to love her so dearly have become too knowing for their tender age, and, no longer capable of wonder, laugh at her stories and turn their backs upon her. Poor Fairy-Lore is doubtless justified in her complaint,—the school-master and newspaper are busy with their disenchantments,—but, as there may be still left among us something of that beautiful unwisdom which once peopled the child's world with visionary shapes, it should have the benefit of such poems as Mary Howitt's "Caldon Low," Allingham's "Fairies," and Allan Cunningham's "Song of the Elfin Miller."

While the compiler has endeavored to accommodate his book to the especial tastes of the young, he has not been without hope that maturer readers may find something of interest in it,—something to bring back the freshness of the past,—hints and echoes from the lost world of childhood. He is happy in believing that, in this way, some noontide wayfarer may be able to discover shadowy places of memory where the dew of the morning of life has not wholly dried up, and where may still be heard the music of the birds of sunrise.

Sincerely hoping that in the selection of these poems of Child-Life, he has not altogether misunderstood the tastes, wishes, and needs of his young readers; he leaves it in their hands, commending to each of them the words of one who has himself written well and wisely for their class:

> "Be good dear child, and let who will be clever
> Do noble things, not dream them, all day long;
> And so make life, death, and that vast forever
> One grand sweet song."

AMESBURY, *4th Month*, 1871. J. G. W.

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INFANCY.

INFANCY.

THE BABY.

Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into the here.

Where did you get your eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?
Some of the starry spikes left in.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?
Something better than any one knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get that pearly ear?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands?
Love made itself into hooks and bands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?
From the same box as the cherub's wings.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear?
God thought of *you*, and so I am here.

— *George Macdonald.*

OLD GAELIC LULLABY.

Hush! the waves are rolling in,
White with foam, white with foam;
Father toils amid the din;
But baby sleeps at home.

Hush ! the winds roar hoarse and deep, —
On they come, on they come !
Brother seeks the wandering sheep :
But baby sleeps at home.

Hush ! the rain sweeps o'er the knowes,
Where they roam, where they roam ;
Sister goes to seek the cows ;
But baby sleeps at home.

LITTLE BIRDIE.

What does little birdie say,
In her nest at peep of day ?
"Let me fly," says little birdie,
"Mother, let me fly away."
"Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger."
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day ?
Baby says, like little birdie,
"Let me rise and fly away."
"Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby, too, shall fly away."

— *Alfred Tennyson.*

A SLEEPING CHILD.

Lips, lips, open !
Up comes a little bird that lives inside,
Up comes a little bird, and peeps, and out he flies.

All the day he sits inside, and sometimes he sings ;
Up he comes and out he goes at night to spread his wings.

Little bird, little bird, whither will you go ?
Round about the world while nobody can know.

Little bird, little bird, whither do you flee ?
Far away round the world while nobody can see.

Little bird, little bird, how long will you roam ?
All round the world and around again home.

Round the round world, and back through the air,
When the morning comes, the little bird is there.

Back comes the little bird, and looks, and in he flies.
Up wakes the little boy, and opens both his eyes.

Sleep, sleep, little boy, little bird's away,
Little bird will come again, by the peep of day ;

Sleep, sleep, little boy, little bird must go
Round about the world, while nobody can know.

Sleep, sleep sound, little bird goes round,
Round and round he goes, — sleep, sleep sound !

— *Arthur Hugh Clough.*

POLLY.

Brown eyes, straight nose ;
Dirt pies, rumpled clothes.

Torn books, spoilt toys ;
Arch looks, unlike a boy's ;

Little rages, obvious arts ;
(Three her age is), cakes, tarts ;

Falling down off chairs ;
Breaking crown down stairs ;

Catching flies on the pane ;
Deep sighs — cause not plain ;

Bribing you with kisses
For a few farthing blisses.

Wide-awake ; as you hear,
"Mercy's sake, quiet, dear !"

New shoes, new frock ;
Vague views of what's o'clock

When it's time to go to bed,
And scorn sublime for what's said.

Folded hands, saying prayers ;
Understands not, nor cares ;

Thinks it odd ; smiles away ;
Yet may God hear her pray !

Bed-gown white ; kiss Dolly ;
Good-night ! that's Polly.

Fast asleep, as you see ;
Heaven keep my girl for me !

—"*Lilliput Levee.*"

MY GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

"WHAT are you good for, my brave little man ?
Answer that question for me, if you can, —
You, with your fingers as white as a nun, —
You, with your ringlets as bright as the sun.
All the day long, with your busy contriving,
Into all mischief and fun you are driving ;
See if your wise little noddle can tell
What you are good for. Now ponder it well."

Over the carpet the dear little feet
Came with a patter to climb on my seat ;
Two merry eyes, full of frolic and glee,
Under their lashes looked up unto me ;
Two little hands pressing soft on my face,
Drew me down close in a loving embrace ;
Two rosy lips gave the answer so true,
'Good to love you, mamma, — good to love you."

— *Emily Huntington Miller.*

WILLIE WINKIE.

Wee Willie Winkie
Runs through the town,
Up-stairs and down-stairs
In his night-gown,
Tapping at the window,
Crying at the lock,
"Are the weans in their bed,
For it's now ten o'clock?"

"Hey! Willie Winkie,
Are you coming then?
The cat's singing purrie
To the sleeping hen;
The dog is lying on the floor
And does not even peep;
But here's a wakeful laddie
That will not fall asleep."

Anything but sleep, you rogue!
Glowering like the moon;
Rattling in an iron jug
With an iron spoon;
Rumbling, tumbling all about,
Crowing like a cock,
Screaming like I don't know what,
Waking sleeping folk.

"Hey! Willie Winkie,
Can't you keep him still?
Wriggling off a body's knee
Like a very eel;
Pulling at the cat's ear,
As she drowsy hums;—
Heigh, Willie Winkie!
See!—there he comes!"

Wearied is the mother
That has a restless wean,
A wee, stumpy bairnie,
Heard whene'er he's seen—
That has a battle aye with sleep
Before he'll close an e'e;
But a kiss from off his rosy lips
Gives strength anew to me.

—*William Miller*

CHOOSING A NAME.

I HAVE got a new-born sister.
I was nigh the first that kissed her.
When the nursing-woman brought her
To papa, his infant daughter,
How papa's dear eyes did glisten !—
She will shortly be to christen ;
And papa has made the offer
I shall have the naming of her.

Now, I wonder what would please her—
Charlotte, Julia or Louisa ?
Ann and Mary they're too common ;
Joan's too formal for a woman ;
Jane's a prettier name beside ;
But we had a Jane that died.
They would say, if 'twas Rebecca,
That she was a little Quaker.
Edith's pretty, but that looks
Better in old English books ;
Ellen's left off long ago ;
Blanche is out of fashion now.
None that I have named as yet
Are so good as Margaret.
Emily is neat and fine ;
What do you think of Caroline ?
How I'm puzzled and perplexed
What to choose or think of next !
I am in a little fever
Lest the name that I should give her
Should disgrace her or defame her :—
I will leave papa to name her.

— *Mary Lamb*

PHILIP, MY KING.

Look at me with thy large, brown eyes,
Philip, my King !
For round thee the purple shadow lies
Of babyhood's regal dignities
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand
With Love's invisible sceptre laden ;
I am thine Esther, to command
Till thou shalt find thy queen hand-maiden,
Philip, my King !

Oh, the day when thou goest a-wooing,
Philip, my King!
When those beautiful lips are suing,
And, some gentle heart's bars undoing,
Thou dost enter, love-crowned, and there
Sittest all glorified! — Rule kindly,
Tenderly, over thy kingdom fair;
For we that love, ah! we love so blindly,
Philip, my King!

I gaze from thy sweet mouth up to thy brow,
Philip, my King!
Aye, there lies the spirit, all sleeping now,
That may rise like a giant, and make men bow
As to one God-throned amidst his peers.
My Saul, than thy brethren higher and fairer,
Let me behold thee in coming years!
Yet thy head needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip, my King —

A wreath, not of gold, but palm! One day,
Philip, my King!
Thou too must tread, as we tread, a way
Thorny, and bitter, and cold, and gray;
Rebels within thee, and foes without
Will snatch at thy crown; but go on, glorious
Martyr, yet monarch! till angels shout,
As thou sittest at the feet of God victorious,
"Philip, the King!"

— *Author of "John Halifax."*

A MOTHER'S EXCUSE.

It comes again, the blessed day,
Made glorious by the Saviour's birth,
When faintly in a manger dawned
The light of God which fills the earth.

Along a weary, wintry waste,
My heart a loving pilgrim wends
Her pious way, this holy time,
To greet you, O beloved friends!

Fondly I long to take my place
Beside your hearth, its joys to share,—
To sun me in the summer smiles
Of the dear faces gathered there.

But baby eyes upraised to mine,
And baby fingers on my breast,
Steep all my soul in sweet content,—
Charm even *such* longings into rest.

Yet, dear ones, let my name be breathed
Kindly around your Christmas-tree,
And the still presence of a soul
Make welcome in the place of me.

No unadorned and humble guest
Comes that fond soul this blessed even,
She bears a jewel on her breast
The fairest of the gifts of heaven.—

A rose that breathes of Paradise,
Just budded from the life divine,
A little, tender, smiling babe,
As yet more God's and heaven's than mine!

Born in the Saviour's hallowed month,
A blessed Christ-child may she be,
A little maiden of the Lord;—
Room for *her* by the Christmas-tree!

—*Grace Greenwood.*

CHRIST AND THE LITTLE ONES.

"The Master has come over Jordan,"
Said Hannah the mother one day;
"He is healing the people who throng Him,
With a touch of His finger, they say.

"And now I shall carry the children,
Little Rachel and Samuel and John,
I shall carry the baby, Esther,
For the Lord to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,
But he shook his head and smiled:
"Now who but a doting mother
Would think of a thing so wild?

"If the children were tortured by demons,
Or dying of fever, 'twere well;
Or had they the taint of the leper,
Like many in Israel."

"Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan,
I feel such a burden of care,
If I carry it to the Master,
Perhaps I shall leave it there.

"If He lay His hand on the children
My heart will be lighter, I know,

For a blessing for ever and ever
  Will follow them as they go."

So over the hills of Judah,
  Along by the vine-rows green,
With Esther asleep on her bosom,
  And Rachel her brothers between ;

'Mid the people who hung on His teaching,
  Or waited His touch and His word, —
Through the row of proud Pharisees listening
  She pressed to the feet of the Lord.

"Now why shouldst thou hinder the Master,"
  Said Peter, "with children like these ?
Seest not how from morning to evening
  He teacheth and healeth disease ? "

Then Christ said, "Forbid not the children,
  Permit them to come unto me ! "
And He took in His arms little Esther,
  And Rachel He set on His knee ;

And the heavy heart of the mother
  Was lifted all earth-care above,
As He laid His hand on the brothers,
  And blest them with tenderest love ;

As He said of the babes in His bosom,
  "Of such are the kingdom of heaven '—
And strength for all duty and trial
  That hour to her spirit were given.

—*Julia Gill.*

SLEEP, BABY, SLEEP!

Sleep, baby, sleep!
Thy father watches his sheep;
Thy mother is shaking the dreamland tree,
And down comes a little dream on thee.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Sleep, baby, sleep!
The large stars are the sheep;

The little stars are the lambs, I guess ;
And the gentle moon is the shepherdess.
Sleep, baby, sleep !

Sleep, baby, sleep !
Our Saviour loves His sheep ;
He is the Lamb of God on high,
Who for our sakes came down to die.
Sleep, baby, sleep !

— *From the German.*

THE BALLAD OF BABIE BELL.

Have you not heard the poets tell
How came the dainty Babie Bell
Into this world of ours ?
The gates of heaven were left ajar ;
With folded hands and dreamy eyes,
Wandering out of Paradise,
She saw this planet, like a star,
Hung in the glistening depths of even, —
Its bridges, running to and fro,
O'er which the white-winged angels go,
Bearing the holy dead to heaven.
She touched a bridge of flowers, — those feet,
So light they did not bend the bells
Of the celestial asphodels !
They fell like dew upon the flowers,
Then all the air grew strangely sweet !
And thus came dainty Babie Bell
Into this world of ours.

She came and brought delicious May.
The swallows built beneath the eaves;
Like sunlight in and out the leaves,
The robins went the livelong day;
The lily swung its noiseless bell,
And o'er the porch the trembling vine
Seemed bursting with its veins of wine
How sweetly, softly, twilight fell!
O, earth was full of singing-birds,
And opening spring-tide flowers,
When the dainty Babie Bell
Came to this world of ours!

O Babie, dainty Babie Bell,
How fair she grew from day to day!
What woman-nature filled her eyes,
What poetry within them lay!
Those deep and tender twilight eyes,
So full of meaning, pure and bright,
As if she yet stood in the light
Of those oped gates of Paradise.
And so we loved her more and more;
Ah, never in our hearts before
Was love so lovely born:
We felt we had a link between
This real world and that unseen —
The land beyond the morn.
And for the love of those dear eyes,
For love of her whom God led forth,
(The mother's being ceased on earth
When Babie came from Paradise), —
For love of Him who smote our lives,
And woke the chords of joy and pain,
We said, *Dear Christ!* — our hearts bent down
Like violets after rain.

And now the orchards, which were white
And red with blossoms when she came,
Were rich in autumn's mellow prime.
The clustered apples burnt like flame,
The soft-cheeked peaches blushed and fell,
The ivory chestnut burst its shell,
The grapes hung purpling in the grange ;
And time wrought just as rich a change
In little Babie Bell.
Her lissome form more perfect grew,
And in her features we could trace,
In softened curves, her mother's face !
Her angel-nature ripened too.
We thought her lovely when she came
But she was holy, saintly now : —
Around her pale angelic brow
We saw a slender ring of flame !

God's hand had taken away the seal
That held the portals of her speech ;
And oft she said a few strange words
Whose meaning lay beyond our reach.
She never was a child to us,
We never held her being's key,
We could not teach her holy things ;
She was Christ's self in purity.

It came upon us by degrees :
We saw its shadow ere it fell,
The knowledge that our God had sent
His messenger for Babie Bell.
We shuddered with unlanguaged pain,
And all our hopes were changed to fears,
And all our thoughts ran into tears
Like sunshine into rain.

We cried aloud in our belief,
"O, smite us gently, gently, God!
Teach us to bend and kiss the rod,
And perfect grow through grief."
Ah, how we loved her, God can tell;
Her heart was folded deep in ours.
Our hearts are broken, Babie Bell!

At last he came, the messenger,
The messenger from unseen lands:
And what did dainty Babie Bell?
She only crossed her little hands,
She only looked more meek and fair!
We parted back her silken hair,
We wove the roses round her brow, —
White buds, the summer's drifted snow, —
Wrapt her from head to foot in flowers!
And then went dainty Babie Bell
Out of this world of ours!

— *T. B. Aldrich.*

THE MORNING-GLORY.

We wreathed about our darling's head
The morning-glory bright;
Her little face looked out beneath,
So full of life and light,
So lit as with a clear sunrise,
That we could only say,
"She is the morning-glory true,
And her poor types are they."

So always from that happy time
We called her by their name,

And very fitting did it seem ;
For sure as morning came,
Behind her cradle bars she smiled
To catch the first faint ray,
As from the trellis smiles the flower,
And opens to the day.

But not so beautiful they rear
Their airy cups of blue,
As turned her sweet eyes to the light,
Brimmed with sleep's tender dew ;
And not so close their tendrils fine
Round their supports are thrown,
As those dear arms whose outstretched plea
Clasped all hearts to her own.

We used to think how she had come,
Even as comes the flower,
The last and perfect added gift
To crown Love's morning hour ,
And how in her was imaged forth
The love we could not say,
As on the little dewdrops round
Shines back the heart of day.

We never could have thought, O God,
That she must wither up,
Almost before a day was flown,
Like the morning-glory's cup ;
We never thought to see her droop
Her fair and noble head,
Till she lay stretched before our eyes,
Wilted, and cold, and dead !

The morning-glory's blossoming
Will soon be coming round ;
We see their rows of heart-shaped leaves
Upspringing from the ground.
The tender things the winter killed
Renew again their birth ;
But the glory of our morning
Has passed away from earth.

Oh, Earth ! in vain our aching eyes
Stretch over thy green plain !
Too harsh thy dews, too gross thine air,
Her spirit to sustain ;
But up in groves of Paradise
Full surely we shall see
Our morning-glory beautiful
Twine round our dear Lord's knee.

—*Maria White Lowell.*

OUR LITTLE QUEEN.

Could you have seen the violets
That blossomed in her eyes;
Could you have kissed that golden hair,
And drank those holy sighs;
You would have been her tiring-maid
As joyfully as I,—
Content to dress your little queen,
And let the world go by.

Could you have seen those violets
Hide in their graves of snow;
Drawn all that gold along your hand
While she lay smiling so;—
O, you would tread this weary earth
As heavily as I!—
Content to clasp her little grave,
And let the world go by.

—*Overland Monthly.*

THE CHANGELING.

I had a little daughter,
And she was given to me,
To lead me gently backward
To the Heavenly Father's knee,
That I, by the force of Nature,
Might in some dim-wise divine
The depth of His infinite patience
To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,
But to me she was wholly fair,
And the light of the heaven she came from
Still lingered and gleamed in her hair ;
For it was as wavy and golden,
And as many changes took,
As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples
On the yellow bed of the brook.

To what can I liken her smiling
Upon me, her kneeling lover ?
How it leaped from her lips to her eyelids,
And dimpled her wholly over,
Till her outstretched hands smiled also,
And I almost seemed to see
The very heart of her mother
Sending sun through her veins to me !

She had been with us scarce a twelvemonth,
And it hardly seemed a day,
When a troop of wandering angels
Stole my little daughter away ;
Or perhaps those heavenly Zincali
But loosed the hampering strings,
And when they opened her cage-door,
My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,
A little angel child,
That seems like her bud in full blossom,
And smiles as she never smiled :
When I wake in the morning, I see it
Where she always used to lie,
And I feel as weak as a violet
Alone 'neath the awful sky : —

As weak, yet as trustful also ;
For the whole year long I see,
All the wonders of faithful Nature
Still worked for the love of me ;
Winds wander, and dews drip earthward,
Rain falls, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,
I cannot sing it to rest,
I cannot lift it up fatherly
And bless it upon my breast ;
Yet it lies in my little one's cradle,
And sits in my little one's chair,
And the light of the heaven she's gone to,
Transfigures its golden hair.

— *James Russell Lowell.*

DEATH OF AN INFANT.

A host of angels flying,
Through cloudless skies impelled,
Upon the earth beheld
A pearl of beauty lying,
Worthy to glitter bright
In heaven's vast halls of light.

They saw, with glances tender,
An infant newly born,
O'er whom life's earliest morn
Just cast its opening splendor.
Virtue it could not know,
Nor vice, nor joy, nor woe.

The blest angelic legion
Greeted its birth above,
And came on wings of love
From heaven's enchanting region,
Bending their winged way
To where the infant lay.

They spread their pinions o'er it, —
That little pearl which shone
With lustre all its own, —
And then on high they bore it,
Where glory has its birth ; —
But left the shell on earth.

— *From the Dutch of Dirk Smits.*

HOW THE GATES CAME AJAR.

'Twas whispered one morning in heaven
How the little child-angel May,
In the shade of the great, white portal,
Sat sorrowing night and day.
How she said to the stately warden —
He of the key and bar —
"O angel, sweet angel ! I pray you,
Set the beautiful gates ajar, —
Only a little, I pray you,
Set the beautiful gates ajar !

"I can hear my mother weeping ;
She is lonely ; she cannot see
A glimmer of light in the darkness,
Where the gates shut after me.
Oh ! turn me the key, sweet angel,

The splendor will shine so far !"
But the warden answered : "I dare not
Set the beautiful gates ajar,"—
Spoke low and answered : "I dare not
Set the beautiful gates ajar !"

Then rose up Mary the Blessed,
Sweet Mary, Mother of Christ :
Her hand on the hand of the angel
She laid, and her touch sufficed ;
Turned was the key in the portal,
Fell ringing the golden bar ;
And lo ! in the little child's fingers
Stood the beautiful gates ajar !
In the little child-angel's fingers
Stood the beautiful gates ajar !

"And this key, for further using,
To my blessed Son shall be given ;"
Said Mary, Mother of Jesus —
Tenderest heart in heaven.
Now, never a sad-eyed mother
But may catch the glory afar ;
Since safe in the Lord Christ's bosom,
Are the keys of the gates ajar ;
Close hid in the dear Christ's bosom,
And the gates forever ajar !

—*From the Italian.*

OUT OF DOORS.

OUT OF DOORS.

THE CHILD'S WORLD.

"Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful world,
With the wonderful water round you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,—
World, you are beautifully drest.

"The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree,
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the tops of the hills.

"You, friendly Earth! how far do you go
With the wheat-fields that nod and the rivers that flow,
With cities and gardens, and cliffs, and isles
And people upon you for thousands of miles?

"Ah, you are so great, and I am so small,
I tremble to think of you, World, at all;
And yet, when I said my prayers, to-day,
A whisper inside me seemed to say,

'You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot:
You can love and think, and the Earth cannot!'"

—"*Lilliput Lectures.*"

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THE COUNTRY CHILD.

With mingled trembling and delight,
And slowly falling feet,
A little country maiden now
Is passing down the street :
A country child, — I know it by
Her timid air, her wondering eye.

The sunlight warm has kissed her brow,
And tinged her cheek with brown ;
The odor of the violets
Comes with her to the town ;
We almost guess the woodland place
Where she has dwelt, from her sweet face !

We almost read her inner thoughts,
Through her large, wistful eyes ;
How bright to her the city seems,
How much like Paradise,
As Nature's child, with bounding heart,
Looks, for the first glad time, on Art !

The merchant, in his store-house door,
Smiles as she passes by ;
The laborer pauses in his work,
To watch her, with a sigh :
Where'er she goes, she wakens dreams
Of shady nooks and rippling streams.

She seems to bring the country here, —
Its birds, its flowers, its dew ;
And slowly, as amid the throng,
She passes from our view,
We watch her sadly, as we might
Some pleasant landscape fade from sight.

Ah, well! we would not keep her here,
These dusty streets to roam, —
So fair a flower should open with
The daisy buds at home;
Mid primrose stars, as sweet and wild,
As she will be, — dear woodland child!

— *Marian Douglas.*

THE BAREFOOT BOY.

Blessings on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
With thy turned-up pantaloons,
And thy merry whistled tunes;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
With the sunshine on thy face,
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace:
From my heart I give thee joy!
I was once a barefoot boy.

Prince thou art, — the grown-up man
Only is republican.
Let the million-dollared ride!
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy,
In the reach of ear and eye, —
Outward sunshine, inward joy:
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

O, for boyhood's painless play;
Sleep that wakes in laughing day;
Health that mocks the doctor's rules;
Knowledge never learned of schools,

Through the day and through the night,
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall ;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond ;
Mine the walnut slopes beyond ;
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides !
Still, as my horizon grew
Larger grew my riches too ;
All the world I saw or knew,
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy !

O, for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread, —
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door-stone, gray and rude !
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wind-swung fold ;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frog's orchestra ;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch : pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy !

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can !
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew ;

Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil:
Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah! that thou could'st know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

—*John G. Whittier*

LITTLE BELL.

Piped the blackbird on the beechwood spray,
"Pretty maid, slow wandering this way,
What's your name?" quoth he—
"What's your name? O stop, and straight unfold,
Pretty maid with showery curls of gold."—
"Little Bell," said she.

Little Bell sat down beneath the rocks—
Tossed aside her gleaming golden locks—
"Bonny bird," quoth she,
"Sing me your best song, before I go."
"Here's the very finest song I know,
Little Bell," said he.

And the blackbird piped; you never heard
Half so gay a song from any bird; —
Full of quips and wiles,
Now so round and rich, now soft and slow,
All for love of that sweet face below,
Dimpled o'er with smiles.

And the while the bonny bird did pour
His full heart out freely o'er and o'er,
'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below,
All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine forth in happy overflow
From the blue, bright eyes.

Down the dell she tripped, and through the glade
Peeped the squirrel from the hazel shade,
And, from out the tree
Swung, and leaped, and frolicked, void of fear, —
While bold blackbird piped, that all might hear,
"Little Bell!" piped he.

Little Bell sat down amid the fern:
"Squirrel, squirrel, to your task return —
Bring me nuts," quoth she.
Up, away the frisky squirrel hies —
Golden wood-lights glancing in his eyes —
And adown the tree,
Great ripe nuts, kissed brown by July sun,
In the little lap, dropped one by one; —
Hark, how blackbird pipes to see the fun!
"Happy Bell!" pipes he.

Little Bell looked up and down the glade; —
"Squirrel, squirrel, if you're not afraid,
Come and share with me!"

Down came squirrel, eager for his fare,—
Down came bonny blackbird, I declare!
Little Bell gave each his honest share;
Ah, the merry three!

And the while these frolic playmates twain
Piped and frisked from bough to bough again,
'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below,
All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine out in happy overflow,
From her blue, bright eyes.

By her snow-white cot at close of day,
Knelt sweet Bell, with folded palms to pray:
Very calm and clear
Rose the praying voice to where, unseen,
In blue heaven, an angel shape serene
Paused awhile to hear.

"What good child is this," the angel said,
"That, with happy heart, beside her bed
Prays so lovingly?"
Low and soft, oh! very low and soft,
Crooned the blackbird in the orchard croft,
"Bell, *dear* Bell!" crooned he.

"Whom God's creatures love," the angel fair
Murmured, "God doth bless with angels' care;
Child, thy bed shall be
Folded safe from harm. Love, deep and kind,
Shall watch around, and leave good gifts behind,
Little Bell, for thee."

— *T. Westwood.*

SEVEN TIMES ONE

THERE's no dew left on the daisies and clover,
  There 's no rain left in heaven :
I've said my "seven times" over and over,
  Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old I can write a letter ;
My birthday lessons are done ;
The lambs play always, they know no better, —
They are only one times one.

O Moon ! in the night I have seen you sailing
And shining so round and low ;
You were bright, ah bright ! but your light is failing, —
You are nothing now but a bow.

You Moon, have you done something wrong in heaven,
That God has hidden your face ?
I hope if you have, you will soon be forgiven,
And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow ;
You've powdered your legs with gold !
O brave marshmary buds, rich and yellow,
Give me your money to hold !

O columbine, open your folded wrapper,
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell !
O cuckoo-pint, toll me the purple clapper
That hangs in your clear green bell !

And show me your nest, with the young ones in it, —
I will not steal it away ;
I am old ! you may trust me, linnet, linnet, —
I am seven times one to-day.

—*Jean Ingelow.*

A WISH.

" Be my fairy, mother,
Give me a wish a day ;
Something, as well in sunshine
As when the rain-drops play."

"And if I were a fairy,
With but one wish to spare,
What should I give thee, darling, —
To quiet thine earnest prayer?"

"I'd like a little brook, mother,
All for my very own,
To laugh all day among the trees,
And shine on the mossy stone;

"To run right under the window,
And sing me fast asleep;
With soft steps and a tender sound,
Over the grass to creep.

"Make it run down the hill, mother,
With a leap like a tinkling bell,
So fast I never can catch the leaf
That into its fountain fell.

"Make it as wild as a frightened bird,
As crazy as a bee,
With a noise like the baby's funny laugh; —
That's the brook for me!"

— *Rose Terry.*

A LITTLE GIRL'S FANCIES.

O LITTLE flowers, you love me so,
You could not do without me;
O little birds that come and go,
You sing sweet songs about me;
O little moss, observed by few,
That round the tree is creeping,
You like my head to rest on you,
When I am idly sleeping.

O rushes by the river side,
You bow when I come near you ;
O fish, you leap about with pride,
Because you think I hear you ;
O river, you shine clear and bright,
To tempt me to look in you ;
O water-lilies, pure and white,
You hope that I shall win you.

O pretty things, you love me so,
I see I must not leave you ;
You'd find it very dull, I know, —
I should not like to grieve you.
Don't wrinkle up, you silly moss ;
My flowers, you need not shiver ;
My little buds, don't look so cross ;
Don't talk so loud, my river

I'm *telling* you I will not go,
It's foolish to feel slighted ;
It's rude to interrupt me so,
You ought to be delighted.
Ah ! now you're growing good, I see,
Though anger is beguiling :
The pretty blossoms nod at me ;—
I see a robin smiling.

And I will make a promise, dears,
That will content you, may be :
I'll love you through the happy years,
Till I'm a nice old lady !
True love (like yours and mine) they say
Can never think of ceasing,
But year by year, and day by day,
Keeps steadily increasing.

— *Poems written for a Child.*

GRACE AND HER FRIENDS.

"Your walk is lonely, blue-eyed Grace,
Down the long forest-road to school,
Where shadows troop, in many a place,
From sullen chasm to sunless pool.
Are you not often, little maid,
Beneath the sighing trees afraid ?"

"Afraid, — beneath the tall, strong trees
That bend their arms to shelter me,
And whisper down, with dew and breeze,
Sweet sounds that float on lovingly,
Till every gorge and cavern seems
Thrilled through and through with fairy dreams ?

" Afraid, — beside the water dim
That holds the baby-lilies white
Upon its bosom, where a hymn
Ripples forth softly to the light
That now and then comes gliding in,
A lily's budding smile to win ?

" Fast to the slippery precipice
I see the nodding harebell cling ;
In that blue eye no ear there is ;
Its hold is firm, — the frail, free thing !
The harebell's Guardian cares for me :
So I am in safe company.

"The woodbine clambers up the cliff
And seems to murmur, 'Little Grace,
The sunshine were less welcome, if
It brought not every day your face.'
Red leaves slip down from maples high,
And touch my cheek as they flit by.

"I feel at home with everything
That has its dwelling in the wood;
With flowers that laugh, and birds that sing,—
Companions beautiful and good,
Brothers and sisters everywhere;
And over all, our Father's care.

"In rose-time or in berry-time,—
When ripe seeds fall, or buds peep out,—
When green the turf, or white the rime,
There's something to be glad about.
It makes my heart bound, just to pass
The sunbeams dancing on the grass.

"And when the bare rocks shut me in
Where not a blade of grass will grow,
My happy fancies soon begin
To warble music, rich and low,
And paint what eyes could never see:
My thoughts are company for me.

"What does it mean to be alone?
And how is any one afraid,
Who feels the dear God on His throne
Beaming like sunshine through the shade,
Warming the damp sod into bloom,
And smiling off the thicket's gloom?

"At morning, down the wood-path cool,
The fluttering leaves make cheerful talk;
After the stifled day at school,
I hear, along my homeward walk,
The airy wisdom of the wood, —
Far easiest to be understood.

"I whisper to the winds; I kiss
The rough old oak, and clasp his bark;
No farewell of the thrush I miss;
I lift the soft veil of the dark,
And say to bird, and breeze, and tree,
'Good night! Good friends you are to me!'"

— *Lucy Larcom.*

OVER IN THE MEADOW.

Over in the meadow,
In the sand, in the sun,
Lived an old mother-toad
And her little toadie one.
"Wink!" said the mother;
"I wink," said the one:
So she winked and she blinked
In the sand, in the sun.

Over in the meadow,
Where the stream runs blue,
Lived an old mother-fish
And her little fishes two.
"Swim!" said the mother;
"We swim," said the two:
So they swam and they leaped
Where the stream runs blue.

Over in the meadow,
In a hole in a tree,
Lived a mother-bluebird
And her little birdies three
"Sing!" said the mother;
"We sing," said the three:
So they sang, and were glad,
In the hole in the tree.

Over in the meadow,
In the reeds on the shore,
Lived a mother-muskrat
And her little ratties four.

"Dive!" said the mother;
"We dive," said the four:
So they dived and they burrowed
In the reeds on the shore.

Over in the meadow,
In a snug beehive,
Lived a mother-honeybee
And her little honeys five.
"Buzz!" said the mother;
"We buzz," said the five:
So they buzzed and they hummed
In the snug beehive.

Over in the meadow,
In a nest built of sticks,
Lived a black mother-crow
And her little crows six.
"Caw!" said the mother;
"We caw," said the six:
So they cawed and they called
In their nest built of sticks.

Over in the meadow,
Where the grass is so even,
Lived a gay mother-cricket
And her little crickets seven.
"Chirp!" said the mother;
"We chirp," said the seven:
So they chirped cheery notes
In the grass soft and even.

Over in the meadow,
By the old mossy gate,
Lived a brown mother-lizard
And her little lizards eight.

"Bask!" said the mother;
"We bask," said the eight:
So they basked in the sun
On the old mossy gate.

Over in the meadow,
Where the clear pools shine,
Lived a green mother-frog
And her little froggies nine.
"Croak!" said the mother;
"We croak," said the nine:
So they croaked, and they plashed,
Where the clear pools shine.

Over in the meadow,
In a sly little den,
Lived a gray mother-spider
And her little spiders ten.
"Spin!" said the mother;
"We spin," said the ten:
So they spun lace webs
In their sly little den.

Over in the meadow,
In the soft summer even,
Lived a mother-fire-fly
And her little flies eleven.
"Shine!" said the mother;
"We shine," said the eleven:
So they shone like stars
In the soft summer even.

Over in the meadow,
Where the men dig and delve,
Lived a wise mother-ant
And her little anties twelve,

"Toil!" said the mother;
"We toil," said the twelve:
So they toiled, and were wise,
Where the men dig and delve.

— *Olive A. Wadsworth.*

WISHING.

Ring-ting! I wish I were a Primrose,
A bright yellow Primrose, blowing in the spring!
The stooping boughs above me,
The wandering bee to love me,
The fern and moss to creep across,
And the Elm-tree for our king!

Nay—stay! I wish I were an Elm-tree,
A great, lofty Elm-tree, with green leaves gay!
The winds would set them dancing,
The sun and moonshine glance in,
The birds would house among the boughs,
And sweetly sing.

O—no! I wish I were a Robin,
A Robin or a little Wren, everywhere to go;

Through forest, field, or garden,
And ask no leave or pardon,
Till winter comes with icy thumbs
To ruffle up our wing!

Well — tell! Where should I fly to,
Where go to sleep in the dark wood or dell?
Before a day was over,
Home comes the rover,
For mother's kiss — sweeter this
Than any other thing.

— *William Allingham.*

STOP, STOP, PRETTY WATER.

"Stop, stop, pretty water!"
Said Mary, one day,
To a frolicsome brook,
That was running away.

"You run on so fast!
I wish you would stay;
My boat and my flowers
You will carry away.

"But I will run after:
Mother says that I may;
For I would know where
You are running away."

So Mary ran on;
But I have heard say,
That she never could find
Where the brook ran away.

— *Mrs. Follen.*

CHILD'S WISH IN JUNE.

Mother, mother, the winds are at play,
Prithee let me be idle to-day,
Look, dear mother, the flowers all lie
Languidly under the bright blue sky.

See how slowly the streamlet glides;
Look how the violet roguishly hides;
Even the butterfly rests on the rose,
And scarcely sips the sweets as he goes.

Poor Tray is asleep in the noonday sun,
And the flies go about him one by one;
And Pussy sits near with a sleepy grace,
Without ever thinking of washing her face.

There flies a bird to a neighboring tree,
But very lazily flutters he;
And he sits and twitters a gentle note,
That scarcely ruffles his little throat.

You bid me be busy; but, mother, hear,
The hum-drum Grasshopper droning near;
And the soft west wind is so light in its play,
It scarcely moves a leaf on the spray.

I wish, oh! I wish, I was yonder cloud,
That sails about with its misty shroud;
Books and work I no more should see,
But I'd come and float, dear mother, o'er thee.

—*Mrs. Gilman.*

UNDER MY WINDOW.

Under my window, under my window,
All in the midsummer weather,
Three little girls, with fluttering curls,
Flit to and fro together :—
There's Bell with her bonnet of satin sheen,
And Maud with her mantle of silver-green,
And Kate with her scarlet feather.

Under my window, under my window,
Leaning stealthily over,
Merry and clear, the voice I hear
Of each glad-hearted rover.
Ah ! sly little Kate, she steals my roses,
And Maud and Bell twine wreaths and posies,
As merry as bees in clover.

Under my window, under my window,
In the blue midsummer weather,
Stealing slow, on a hushed tip-toe,
I catch them all together :—
Bell with her bonnet of satin sheen,
And Maud with her mantle of silver-green,
And Kate with the scarlet feather.

Under my window, under my window,
And off through the orchard closes ;
While Maud she flouts, and Bell she pouts,
They scamper, and drop their posies ;
But dear little Kate takes naught amiss,
And leaps in my arms with a loving kiss,
And I give her all my roses.

— *T. Westwood.*

THE SCHOOL.

"Little girl, where do you go to school,
And when do you go, little girl?
Over the grass, from dawn till dark,
Your feet are in a whirl:
You and the cat jump here and there,
You and the robins sing;
But what do you know in the spelling-book?
Have you ever *learned* any thing?"

Thus the little girl answered, —
Only stopping to cling
To my finger a minute,
As a bird on the wing
Catches a twig of sumach,
And stops to twitter and swing, —

"When the daisies' eyes are a-twinkle
With happy tears of dew;
When swallows waken in the eaves,
And the lamb bleats to the ewe;
When the lawns are golden-barred,
And the kiss of the wind is cool;
When morning's breath blows out the stars, —
Then do I go to school!

"My school-roof is the dappled sky;
And the bells that ring for me there
Are all the voices of morning
Afloat in the dewy air.
Kind Nature is the Madame;
And the book whereout I spell
Is dog's-eared by the brooks and glens
Where I know the lesson well."

Thus the little girl answered,
In her musical out-door tone :
She was up to my pocket,
I was a man full-grown ;
But the next time that she goes to school,
She will not go alone !

— *Fitz-Hugh Ludlow.*

"HOLD FAST WHAT I GIVE YOU."

"Molly, and Maggie, and Alice,
Three little maids in a row,
At play in an arbor palace,
Where the honeysuckles grow, —

"Six dimpled palms pressed together,
Even and firm, two by two, —
Three eager, upturned faces,
Bonny brown eyes and blue.

"Which shall it be, O you charmers ?
Alas ! I am sorely tried, —
I, a hard-hearted old hermit,
Who the question am set to decide.

"Molly, the sprite, the darling,
Shaking her shower of curls,
Whose laugh is the brook's own ripple,
Gayest and gladdest of girls ?

"Maggie, the wild little brownie,
Every one's plaything and pet,
Who leads me a chase through the garden
For a kiss, the wicked coquette ?

"Or Alice? — ah! shy-eyed Alice,
Looking so softly down
Under her long, dark lashes
And hair so golden brown, —

"Alice, who talks with the flowers,
And says there are none so wise, —
Who *knows* there are elves and fairies,
For has n't she seen their bright eyes?

"There, there, at last I am ready
To go down the bright, eager row;
So, up with your hands, my Graces,
Close, — nobody else must know.

"'Hold fast what I give you,' Molly!
(Poor little empty palms!)
'Hold fast what I give you,' Maggie!
(A frown steals over her charms.)

"'Hold fast what I give you,' Alice!
You smile, — *do* you so much care?
Unclasp your little pink fingers:
Ah ha! the button is there!

"But do you know, sweet Alice,
All that I give you to keep?
For into my heart you have stolen,
As sunbeams to shadows creep.

"You, a glad little maiden, —
How old are you? Only nine, —
With your bright, brown hair all shining,
While the gray is coming to mine.

"No matter, you 'll be my true-love,
And come to my old arms so;
And 'hold fast what I give you,' Alice,
For nobody else must know." — *Lily Warner.*

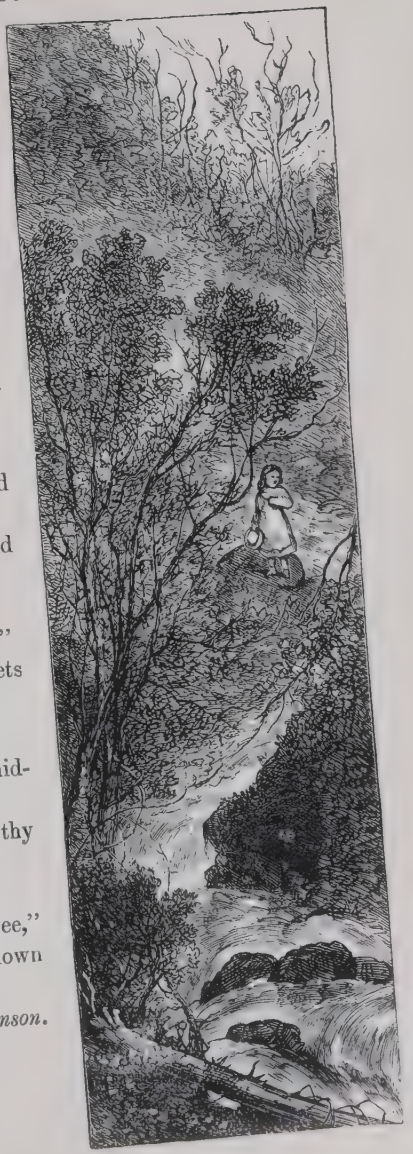
THE TREE.

THE Tree's early leaf-buds were
bursting their brown;
"Shall I take them away?" said
the Frost, sweeping down.
"No, leave them alone
Till the blossoms have grown,"
Prayed the Tree, while he trembled
from rootlet to crown.

The Tree bore his blossoms, and
all the birds sung:
"Shall I take them away?" said
the Wind, as he swung.
"No, leave them alone
Till the berries have grown,"
Said the Tree, while his leaflets
quivering hung.

The Tree bore his fruit in the mid-
summer glow:
Said the girl, "May I gather thy
berries now?"
"Yes, all thou canst see:
Take them; all are for thee,"
Said the Tree, while he bent down
his laden boughs low.

— *Björnstjerne Björnson.*



GOOD-NIGHT AND GOOD-MORNING.

A FAIR little girl sat under a tree,
Sewing as long as her eyes could see ;
Then smoothed her work and folded it right,
And said, " Dear work, good-night, good-night ! "

Such a number of rooks came over her head,
Crying " Caw ! Caw ! " on their way to bed,
She said, as she watched their curious flight,
" Little black things, good-night, good-night ! "

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed,
The sheep's " Bleat ! Bleat ! " came over the road ;
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,
" Good little girl, good-night, good-night ! "

She did not say to the sun, " Good-night ! "
Though she saw him there like a ball of light ;
For she knew he had God's time to keep
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall pink foxglove bowed his head ;
The violets curtsied, and went to bed ;
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,
And said, on her knees, her favorite prayer.

And, while on her pillow she softly lay,
She knew nothing more till again it was day ;
And all things said to the beautiful sun,
" Good-morning, good-morning ! our work is begun."

— *Lord Houghton.*

THE LITTLE MAIDEN AND THE LITTLE BIRD.

"LITTLE bird! little bird! come to me!
I have a green cage ready for thee, —
Beauty-bright flowers I'll bring anew,
And fresh, ripe cherries, all wet with dew."

"Thanks, little maiden, for all thy care, —
But I love dearly, the clear, cool air,
And my snug little nest in the old oak-tree."
"Little bird! little bird! stay with me."

"Nay, little damsel! away I'll fly
To greener fields and warmer sky;
When Spring returns with pattering rain,
You'll hear my merry song again."

"Little bird! little bird! who'll guide thee
Over the hills and over the sea?
Foolish one! come in the house to stay,
For I'm very sure you'll lose your way."

"Ah, no, little maiden! God guides me
Over the hills, and over the sea;
I will be free as the rushing air,
And sing of sunshine everywhere."

— *L. Maria Child.*

THE ORIOLES.

Four little mouths agape for ever;
Four little throats which are never full;
Four little nestlings, who dissever
One big worm, by a mighty pull.

Up on a limb — the lazy fellow! —
Perches the father, bold and gay,
Proud of his coat of black and yellow,
Always singing throughout the day.

Close at their side, the watchful mother,
Quietly sober in dress and song,
Chooses her place, and asks no other,
Flying and gleaning all day long.

Four little mouths in time grow smaller,
Four little throats in time are filled;
Four little nestlings quite appall her,
Spreading their wings for the sun to gild.

Lazy no longer sits the father, —
His is the care of the singing-school ;
He must teach them to fly, and gather
Splendid worms by the nearest pool.

Singing away on the shaken branches,
Under the light of the happy sun ;
Dropping through blossoms like avalanches, —
Father Oriole's work is done.

Four little beaks their mouths embolden,
Four little throats are round and strong ;
Four little nestlings, fledged and golden,
Graduate in the world of song.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

Quoth the boy, "I'll climb that tree,
And bring down a nest I know."
Quoth the girl, "I will not see
Little birds defrauded so !
Cowardly, their nests to take,
And their little hearts to break,
And their little nests to steal
Leave them happy for my sake !
Surely little birds can feel ! "

Quoth the boy, "My senses whirl ;
Until now I never heard
Of the wisdom of a girl,
Or the feelings of a bird !
Pretty Mrs. Solomon,
Tell me what you reckon on

When you prate in such a strain ;
If I wring their necks anon,
Certainly they *might* feel — pain ! "

Quoth the girl, " I watch them talk,
Making love and making fun,
In the pretty ash-tree walk,
When my daily task is done :
In their little eyes I find
They are very fond and kind.
Every change of song or voice
Plainly proveth to my soul
They can suffer and rejoice."

And the little Robin-bird
(Nice brown back and crimson breast)
All the conversation heard,
Sitting trembling in his nest.
" What a world," he cried, " of bliss —
Full of birds and girls, were this !
Blithe we 'd answer to their call ;
But a great mistake it is
Boys were ever made at all."

— *Poems written for a Child.*

SING ON, BLITHE BIRD !

I 've plucked the berry from the bush, the brown nut from the tree,
But heart of happy little bird ne'er broken was by me.
I saw them in their curious nests, close couching, slyly peer
With their wild eyes, like glittering beads, to note if harm were near ;
I passed them by, and blessed them all ; I felt that it was good
To leave unmoved the creatures small whose home was in the wood

And here, even now, above my head, a lusty rogue doth sing,
He pecks his swelling breast and neck, and trims his little wing.
He will not fly ; he knows full well, while chirping on that spray,
I would not harm him for a world, or interrupt his lay.
Sing on, sing on, blithe bird ! and fill my heart with summer gladness,
It has been aching many a day with measures full of sadness !

— *William Motherwell.*

THE SANDPIPER.

Across the lonely beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I,
And fast I gather, bit by bit,
The scattered drift-wood, bleached and dry.
The wild waves reach their hands for it,
The wild wind raves, the tide runs high,
As up and down the beach we flit,
One little sandpiper and I.

Above our heads the sullen clouds
Scud, black and swift, across the sky ;
Like silent ghosts in misty shrouds
Stand out the white light-houses high.
Almost as far as eye can reach
I see the close-reefed vessels fly,
As fast we flit along the beach,
One little sandpiper and I.

I watch him as he skims along,
Uttering his sweet and mournful cry ;
He starts not at my fitful song,
Nor flash of fluttering drapery.

He has no thought of any wrong,
He scans me with a fearless eye ;
Stanch friends are we, well tried and strong,
The little sandpiper and I.

Comrade, where wilt thou be to-night,
When the loosed storm breaks furiously ?
My drift-wood fire will burn so bright !
To what warm shelter canst thou fly ?
I do not fear for thee, though wroth
The tempest rushes through the sky ;
For are we not God's children both,
Thou, little sandpiper, and I ?

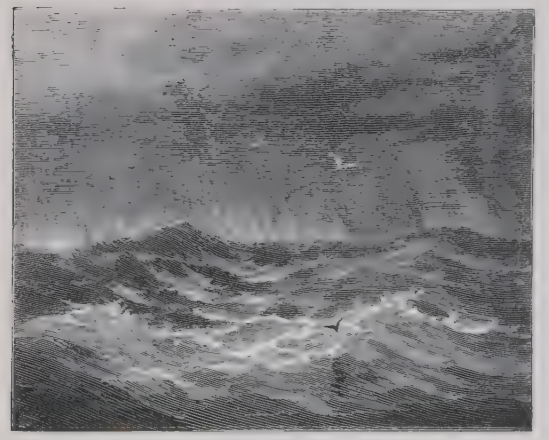
— *Celia Thaxter.*

THE SORROWFUL SEA-GULL.

The sea-gull *is* so sorry !
She flings herself about,
And utters little, wailing cries,
And flutters in and out.
The fishes do not sympathize, –
Fish are so very cool !
They make so many rules, you know ;
And who can *feel* by rule ?

They have a rule for swimming,
A rule for taking food ;
They have a rule for pleasure trips,
A rule for doing good.
And people who make rules like that
May drive, and work, and swim,
But never know how sweet a thing
It is to take a whim !

I'd like to be a sea-gull,
With lovely beak and claws ;
I would not like to be a fish,
Subject to fishy laws.
And if they make more changes soon
By acts of Parliament,
I won't consent to be a fish, —
I *never will* consent !



Why is the sea-gull sorry ?
I 'm not allowed to tell.
The fish, who will not sympathize,
Know what 's the matter well !
And you who feel with all your hearts,
And give her love and tears,
Are not allowed to hear a word ; —
And such is life, my dears !

— *Child-World.*

THE BROWN THRUSH.

THERE 's a merry brown thrush sitting up in the tree,
" He 's singing to me ! He 's singing to me ! "
And what does he say, little girl, little boy ?
" Oh, the world 's running over with joy !
Don't you hear ? Don't you see ?
Hush ! Look ! In my tree,
I 'm as happy as happy can be ! "

And the brown thrush keeps singing, " A nest do you see,
And five eggs hid by me in the juniper-tree ?
Don't meddle ! don't touch ! little girl, little boy,
Or the world will lose some of its joy !
Now I 'm glad ! now I 'm free !
And I always shall be,
If you never bring sorrow to me."

So the merry brown thrush sings away in the tree,
To you and to me, to you and to me,
And he sings all the day, little girl, little boy,
" Oh, the world 's running over with joy ;
But long it won't be,
Don't you know ? don't you see ?
Unless we are as good as can be ? "

— *Lucy Larcom.*

WHO STOLE THE BIRD'S NEST.

" TO-WHIT ! to-whit ! to-whee !
Will you listen to me ?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made ? "

"Not I," said the cow, "Moo-oo!
Such a thing I'd never do.
I gave you a wisp of hay,
But did n't take your nest away.
Not I," said the cow, "Moo-oo!
Such a thing I'd never do."

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Bob-o'-link! Bob-o'-link!
Now what do you think?
Who stole a nest away
From the plum-tree, to-day?"

"Not I," said the dog, "Bow-wow!
I would n't be so mean, any how!
I gave hairs the nest to make,
But the nest I did not take.
Not I," said the dog, "Bow-wow!
I 'm not so mean, any how."

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Bob-o'-link! Bob-o'-link!
Now what do you think?
Who stole a nest away
From the plum-tree, to-day?"

"Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo!
Let me speak a word, too!
Who stole that pretty nest
From little yellow-breast?"

"Not I," said the sheep; "Oh, no!
I would n't treat a poor bird so
I gave wool the nest to line,
But the nest was none of mine.
Baa! Baa!" said the sheep, "Oh, no,
I would n't treat a poor bird so."

"To-whit! to-whit! to-whee!
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid,
And the nice nest I made?"

"Bob-o'-link! Bob-o'-link!
Now what do you think?
Who stole a nest away
From the plum-tree, to-day?"

"Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo!
Let me speak a word, too!
Who stole that pretty nest
From little yellow-breast?

"Caw! Caw!" cried the crow;
"I should like to know
What thief took away
A bird's nest, to-day?"

"Cluck! Cluck!" said the hen;
"Don't ask me again,
Why, I have n't a chick
Would do such a trick.
We all gave her a feather,
And she wove them together.
I'd scorn to intrude
On her and her brood.
Cluck! Cluck!" said the hen,
"Don't ask me again."

"Chirr-a-whirr! Chirr-a-whirr!
All the birds make a stir!
Let us find out his name,
And all cry 'for shame!'"

"I would not rob a bird,"
Said little Mary Green;
"I think I never heard
Of anything so mean."

"It is very cruel, too,"
Said little Alice Neal;
"I wonder if he knew
How sad the bird would feel?"

A little boy hung down his head,
And went and hid behind the bed,
For *he* stole that pretty nest
From poor little yellow-breast;
And he felt so full of shame,
He didn't like to tell his name.

— *L. Maria Child.*

ROBERT OF LINCOLN.

Merrily swinging on briar and weed,
Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain-side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name.
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Snug and safe is this nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dressed,
Wearing a bright, black wedding-coat ;
White are his shoulders, and white his crest,
Hear him call in his merry note,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Look what a nice, new coat is mine ;
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
Broods in the grass while her husband sings,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Brood, kind creature, you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;
One weak chirp is her only note;
Braggart, and prince of braggarts is he,
Pouring boasts from his little throat,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Never was I afraid of man,
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can.
Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight:
There as the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
Nice good wife that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about.
Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
Six wide mouths are open for food;
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
Gathering seeds for the hungry brood:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made
Sober with work, and silent with care,
Off is his holiday garment laid,
Half forgotten that merry air
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,

Nobody knows, but my mate and I,
Where our nest and our nestlings lie.
Chee, chee, chee.

Summer wanes ; the children are grown ;
Fun and frolic no more he knows,
Robert of Lincoln's a hum-drum crone ;
Off he flies and we sing as he goes,
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink,
When you can pipe that merry old strain,
Robert of Lincoln, come back again.
Chee, chee, chee.

— *William Cullen Bryant.*

THE BLUEBIRD.

I KNOW the song that the bluebird is singing,
Out in the apple-tree where he is swinging.
Brave little fellow ! the skies may be dreary, —
Nothing cares he while his heart is so cheery.

Hark ! how the music leaps out from his throat !
Hark ! was there ever so merry a note ?
Listen a while, and you'll hear what he's saying,
Up in the apple-tree swinging and swaying.

"Dear little blossoms down under the snow,
You must be weary of winter, I know ;
Hark while I sing you a message of cheer !
Summer is coming ! and spring-time is here !

"Little white snow-drop ! I pray you arise ;
Bright yellow crocus ! come open your eyes ;

Sweet little violets, hid from the cold,
Put on your mantles of purple and gold;
Daffodils! daffodils! say, do you hear?—
Summer is coming! and spring-time is here!

— *Emily Huntington Miller*

MILKING.

Little dun cow to the apple-tree tied
  Chewing the cud of reflection,
I that am milking you, sit by your side,
  Lost in a sad retrospection.

Far o'er the fields the tall daisies blush warm,
For rosy the sunset is dying ;
Across the still valley, o'er meadow and farm,
The flush of its beauty is lying.

White foams the milk in the pail at my feet ;
Clearly the robins are calling :
Soft blows the evening wind after the heat ;
Cool the long shadows are falling.

Little dun cow, 'tis so tranquil and sweet !
Are *you* light-hearted, I wonder ?
What do you think about — something to eat ?
On clover and grass do you ponder ?

I am remembering days that are dead,
And a brown little maid in the gloaming,
Milking her cow, with the west burning red
Over waves that about her were foaming.

Up from the sad east the deep shadows gloomed
Out of the distance and found her ;
Lightly she sang, while the solemn sea boomed
Like a great organ, around her.

Under the light-house no sweet-brier grew,
Dry was the grass, and no daisies
Waved in the wind, and the flowers were few
That lifted their delicate faces.

But O, she was happy, and careless, and blest,
Full of the song-sparrow's spirit ;
Grateful for life, for the least and the best
Of the blessings that mortals inherit.

Fairer than gardens of Paradise seemed
The desolate spaces of water ;
Nature was hers — clouds that frowned, stars that gleamed, —
What beautiful lessons they taught her !

Would I could find you again, little maid,
Striving with utmost endeavor, —
Could find in my breast that light heart, unafraid,
That has vanished forever and ever !

— *Celia Thaxter.*

THE COW-BOY'S SONG.

" Mooly cow, mooly cow, home from the wood
They sent me to fetch you as fast as I could.
The sun has gone down : it is time to go home.
Mooly cow, mooly cow, why don't you come ?
Your udders are full, and the milkmaid is there,
And the children all waiting their supper to share.
I have let the long bars down, — why don't you pass through ? "
The mooly cow only said, " Moo-o-o ! "

" Mooly cow, mooly cow, have you not been
Regaling all day where the pastures are green ?
No doubt it was pleasant, dear mooly, to see
The clear running brook and the wide-spreading tree,
The clover to crop, and the streamlet to wade,
To drink the cool water and lie in the shade ;
But now it is night : they are waiting for you. "
The mooly cow only said, " Moo-o-o ! "

" Mooly cow, mooly cow, where do you go,
When all the green pastures are covered with snow ?

You go to the barn, and we feed you with hay,
And the maid goes to milk you there, every day ;
She pats you, she loves you, she strokes your sleek hide,
She speaks to you kindly, and sits by your side :
Then come along home, pretty mooly cow, do."
The mooly cow only said, "Moo-o-o !"

"Mooly cow, mooly cow, whisking your tail,
The milkmaid is waiting, I say, with her pail ;
She tucks up her petticoats, tidy and neat,
And places the three-legged stool for her seat : —
What can you be staring at, mooly? You know
That we ought to have gone home an hour ago.
How dark it is growing ! O, what shall I do?"
The mooly cow only said, "Moo-o-o !"

— *Mrs. Anna M. Wells*

OLD DOBBIN.

HERE 's a song for old Dobbin, whose temper and worth
Were too rare to be spurned on the score of his birth.
He 's a creature of trust, and what more should we heed ?
'Tis deeds, and not blood, make the man and the steed.

He was bred in the forest, and turned on the plain,
Where the thistle-burs clung to his fetlocks and mane :
All ugly and rough, not a soul could espy
The spark of good-nature that dwelt in his eye.

The summer had waned, and the autumn months rolled
Into those of stern winter, so dreary and cold ;
But the north wind might whistle, the snow-flake might dance, —
The colt of the common was left to his chance.

Half-starved and half-frozen, the hail storm would pelt
Till his shivering limbs told the pangs that he felt ;
But we pitied the brute, and, though laughed at by all,
We filled him a manger and gave him a stall.

He was fond as a spaniel, and soon he became
The pride of the herd-boy, the pet of the dame.
'Tis well that his market-price cannot be known ;
But we christened him Dobbin, and called him our own.

He grew out of colthood, and, lo! what a change!
The knowing ones said it was "mortally strange ;"
For the foal of the forest, the colt of the waste,
Attracted the notice of jockeys of taste.

The line of his symmetry was not exact,
But his paces were clever, his mould was compact ;
And his shaggy thick coat now appeared with a gloss,
Shining out like the gold that 's been purged of its dross.

We broke him for service, and tamely he wore
Girth and rein, seeming proud of the thraldom he bore ;
Each farm, it is known, must possess an "odd" steed
And Dobbin was ours, for all times and all need.

He carried the master to barter his grain,
And ever returned with him safely again :
There was merit in that, for — deny it who may —
When the master could *not*, Dobbin *could* find his way.

The dairy-maid ventured her eggs on his back,
'Twas him, and him only, she 'd trust with the pack ;
The team-horses jolted, the roadster played pranks ;
So Dobbin alone had her faith and her thanks.

We fun-loving urchins would group by his side ;
We might fearlessly mount him, and daringly ride ;
We might creep through his legs, we might plait his long tail,
But his temper and patience were sure not to fail.

We would brush his bright hide till 'twas free from a speck ;
We kissed his brown muzzle, and hugged his thick neck ;
Oh ! we prized him like life, and a heart-breaking sob
Ever burst when they threatened to sell our dear Dob.

He stood to the collar, and tugged up the hill,
With the pigs to the market, the grist to the mill ;
With saddle or halter, in shaft or in trace,
He was stanch to his work, and content with his place.

When the hot sun was crowning the toil of the year,
He was sent to the reapers with ale and good cheer ;
And none in the corn-field more welcome were seen
Than Dob and his well-laden panniers, I ween.

Oh ! those days of pure bliss shall I ever forget
When we decked out his head with the azure rosette ?

All frantic with joy to be off to the fair,
With Dobbin, good Dobbin, to carry us there?

He was dear to us all, ay, for many long years; —
But, mercy! how's this? my eye's filling with tears.
Oh, how cruelly sweet are the echoes that start
When memory plays an old tune on the heart!

There are drops on my cheek; there's a throb in my breast,
But my song shall not cease, nor my pen take its rest,
Till I tell that old Dobbin still lives to be seen,
With his oats in the stable, his tares on the green.

His best years have gone by, and the master who gave
The stern yoke to his youth has enfranchised the slave;
So browse on, my old Dobbin, nor dream of the knife,
For the wealth of a king should not purchase thy life.

— *Eliza Cook.*

FARM-YARD SONG.

Over the hill the farm-boy goes,
His shadow lengthens along the land,
A giant staff in a giant hand;
In the poplar-tree, above the spring,
The katydid begins to sing;
The early dews are falling; —
Into the stone-heap darts the mink;
The swallows skim the river's brink:
And home to the woodland fly the crows,
When over the hill the farm-boy goes,
Cheerily calling, —
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!"

Farther, farther over the hill,
Faintly calling, calling still, —
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'!"

Into the yard the farmer goes,
With grateful heart, at the close of day:
Harness and chain are hung away;
In the wagon-shed stand yoke and plough;
The straw's in the stack, the hay in the mow,
The cooling dews are falling; —
The friendly sheep his welcome bleat,
The pigs come grunting to his feet,
The whinnying mare her master knows,
When into the yard the farmer goes,
His cattle calling, —
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!"

While still the cow-boy, far away,
Goes seeking those that have gone astray, —
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'!"

Now to her task the milkmaid goes.
The cattle come crowding through the gate,
Lowing, pushing, little and great;
About the trough, by the farm-yard pump,
The frolicsome yearlings frisk and jump,
While the pleasant dews are falling; —
The new-milch heifer is quick and shy,
But the old cow waits with tranquil eye;
And the white stream into the bright pail flows,
When to her task the milkmaid goes,
Soothingly calling, —
"So, boss! so, boss! so! so! so!"
The cheerful milkmaid takes her stool,
And sits and milks in the twilight cool,
Saying, "So! so, boss! so! so!"

To supper at last the farmer goes.
The apples are pared, the paper read,
The stories are told, then all to bed.
Without, the crickets' ceaseless song
Makes shrill the silence all night long;
The heavy dews are falling.
The housewife's hand has turned the lock;
Drowsily ticks the kitchen clock;
The household sinks to deep repose;
But still in sleep the farm-boy goes
Singing, calling, —
"Co', boss! co', boss! co'! co'! co'!"
And oft the milkmaid, in her dreams,
Drums in the pail with the flashing streams,
Murmuring, "So, boss! so!"

—*J. T. Trowbridge.*

BOYS' PLAY AND GIRLS' PLAY.

"Now, let's have a game of play,
Lucy, Jane, and little May!
I will be a grizzly bear:
Prowling here and prowling there,

Sniffing round and round about,
Till I find you children out;
And my dreadful den shall be
Deep within the hollow tree."

"Oh, no! please not, Robert dear,
Do not be a grizzly bear!
Little May was half afraid
When she heard the noise you made,
Roaring like a lion strong,
Just now as you came along;
And she 'll scream and start, to-night,
If you give her any fright."

"Well, then, I will be a fox!
You shall be the hens and cocks,
In the farmer's apple-tree,
Crowing out so lustily;
I will softly creep this way —
Peep — and pounce upon my prey;
And I 'll bear you to my den —
Where the fern grows in the glen."

"Oh, no, Robert! you 're so strong,
While you 're dragging us along
I 'm afraid you 'll tear our frocks:
We *won't* play at hens and cocks."
"If you won't play fox or bears,
I 'm a dog, and you be hares;
Then you 'll only have to run; —
Girls are never up to fun."

"You 've *your* play, and we have *ours*:
Go and climb the trees again!
I, and little May, and Jane,
Are so happy with our flowers!

Jane is culling foxglove bells ;
May and I are making posies,
And we want to search the dells,
For the latest summer roses."

— *Mrs. Hawtrey.*

LITTLE WHITE LILY.

Little white Lily
Sat by a stone,
Drooping and waiting
Till the sun shone.
Little white Lily
Sunshine has fed ;
Little white Lily
Is lifting her head.

Little white Lily
Said, " It is good —
Little white Lily's
Clothing and food."
Little white Lily
Drest like a bride !
Shining with whiteness,
And crowned beside !

Little white Lily
Droopeth with pain,
Waiting and waiting
For the wet rain.
Little white Lily
Holdeth her cup ;
Rain is fast falling
And filling it up.

Little white Lily
Said, "Good again —
When I am thirsty
To have fresh rain!
Now I am stronger;
Now I am cool;
Heat cannot burn me,
My veins are so full."

Little white Lily
Smells very sweet:
On her head sunshine,
Rain at her feet.
"Thanks to the sunshine,
Thanks to the rain!
Little white Lily
Is happy again!"

—*George Macdonald*

BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES.

Buttercups and Daisies,
Oh! the pretty flowers!
Coming ere the spring-time,
To tell of sunny hours.
While the trees are leafless,
While the fields are bare,
Buttercups and Daisies
Spring up everywhere.

Little hardy flowers,
Like to children poor,
Playing in their sturdy health,
By their mother's door;

Purple with the north wind,
  Yet alert and bold,
Fearing not, and caring not,
  Though they be a-cold.

What to them is weather?
  What are stormy showers?
Buttercups and Daisies,
  Are these human flowers!
He who gave them hardship,
  And a life of care,
Gave them likewise hardy strength,
  And patient hearts to bear!

Welcome, yellow Buttercups!
  Welcome, Daisies white!
Ye are in my spirit
  Visioned, a delight!
Coming ere the spring-time
  Of sunny hours to tell; —
Speaking to our hearts of Him
  Who doeth all things well.

— *Mary Howitt.*

LITTLE DANDELION.

Gay little Dandelion
  Lights up the meads,
Swings on her slender foot,
  Telleth her beads,
Lists to the robin's note
  Poured from above:
Wise little Dandelion
  Asks not for love.

Cold lie the daisy banks
  Clothed but in green,
Where, in the days agone,
  Bright hues were seen.
Wild pinks are slumbering ;
  Violets delay :
True little Dandelion
  Greeteth the May.

Brave little Dandelion !
  Fast falls the snow,
Bending the daffodil's
  Haughty head low.
Under that fleecy tent,
  Careless of cold,
Blithe little Dandelion
  Counteth her gold.

Meek little Dandelion
Groweth more fair,
Till dies the amber dew
Out from her hair.
High rides the thirsty sun,
Fiercely and high ;
Faint little Dandelion
Closeth her eye.

Pale little Dandelion,
In her white shroud,
Heareth the angel-breeze
Call from the cloud !
Tiny plumes fluttering
Make no delay !
Little winged Dandelion
Soareth away.

— *Helen B. Bostwick.*

THE BRAMBLE-FLOWER.

Thy fruit full well the school-boy knows,
Wild bramble of the brake !
So put thou forth thy small white rose,
I love it for his sake.
Though woodbines flaunt, and roses glow
Through all the fragrant bowers,
Thou need'st not be ashamed to show
Thy satin-threaded flowers ;
For dull the eye, the heart is dull,
That cannot feel how fair,
Amid all beauty beautiful
Thy tender blossoms are.

How delicate thy gauzy frill !
  How rich thy branchy stem !
How soft thy voice when woods are still,
  And thou sing'st hymns to them,
While silent showers are falling slow,
  And 'mid the general hush
A sweet air lifts the little bough,
  Lone whispering through the bush !

The primrose to the grave is gone ;
  The hawthorn flower is dead ;
The violet by the mossed gray stone
  Hath laid her weary head ;
But thou, wild bramble, back dost bring
  In all their beauteous power
The fresh green days of life's fair spring,
  And boyhood's blossom hour.
Scorned bramble of the brake ! once more
  Thou biddest me be a boy,
To gad with thee the woodlands o'er,
  In freedom and in joy.

— *Ebenezer Elliott.*

JACK IN THE PULPIT.

Jack in the pulpit
  Preaches to-day,
Under the green trees
  Just over the way.
Squirrel and song-sparrow
  High on their perch,
Hear the sweet lily-bells
  Ringing to church.

Come, hear what his reverence
  Rises to say
In his low painted pulpit
  This calm Sabbath-day.
Fair is the canopy
  Over him seen,
Pencilled by Nature's hand,
  Black, brown and green.
Green is his surplice,
  Green are his bands ;
In his queer little pulpit
  The little priest stands.

In black and gold velvet,
  So gorgeous to see,
Comes with his bass voice
  The chorister bee.
Green fingers playing
  Unseen on wind-lyres, —
Low singing bird voices —
  These are his choirs.
The violets are deacons
  I know by the sign
That the cups which they carry
  Are purple with wine.
And the columbines bravely
  As sentinels stand
On the look-out with all their
  Red trumpets in hand.

Meek-faced anemones
  Drooping and sad ;
Great yellow violets,
  Smiling out glad ;

Buttercups' faces
  Beaming and bright ;
Clovers, with bonnets —
  Some red and some white ;
Daisies, their white fingers
  Half-clasped in prayer ;
Dandelions, proud of
  The gold of their hair ;
Innocents, children
  Guileless and frail,
Meek little faces
  Upturned and pale ;
Wild-wood geraniums,
  All in their best,
Languidly leaning
  In purple gauze dressed : —
All are assembled
  This sweet Sabbath-day
To hear what the priest
  In his pulpit will say.

Look ! white Indian pipes
  On the green mosses lie !
Who has been smoking
  Profanely so nigh ?
Rebuked by the preacher
  The mischief is stopped,
But the sinners, in haste,
  Have their little pipes dropped
Let the wind with the fragrance
  Of fern and black birch,
Blow the smell of the smoking
  Clean out of our church !

So much for the preacher :
The sermon comes next, —
Shall we tell how he preached it,
And where was his text ?
Alas ! like too many
Grown up folks who play
At worship in churches
Man-builded to-day, —
We heard not the preacher
Expound or discuss ;
But we looked at the people,
And they looked at us.
We saw all their dresses,
Their colors and shapes ;
The trim of their bonnets,
The cut of their capes.
We heard the wind-organ,
The bee and the bird,
But of Jack in the Pulpit
We heard not a word !

— *Clara Smith.*

THE VIOLET.

Down in a green and shady bed
A modest violet grew ;
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head,
As if to hide from view.

And yet it was a lovely flower,
Its colors bright and fair !
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there.

Yet there it was content to bloom.
In modest tints arrayed ;
And there diffused its sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.

Then let me to the valley go,
This pretty flower to see,
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.

—*Jane Taylor.*

WINTER.

Old winter is a sturdy one,
And lasting stuff he's made of:
His flesh is firm as ironstone,
There's nothing he's afraid of.

He spreads his coat upon the heath,
Nor yet to warm it lingers;
He scouts the thought of aching teeth,
Or chilblains on his fingers.

Of flowers that bloom or birds that sing,
Full little cares or knows he;
He hates the fire, and hates the spring,
And all that's warm and cosy.

But when the foxes bark aloud
On frozen lake and river, —
When round the fire the people crowd,
And rub their hands and shiver, —

When frost is splitting stone and wall,
  And trees come crashing after,
That hates he not, he loves it all, —
  Then bursts he out in laughter.

His home is by the North Pole's strand,
  Where earth and sea are frozen ;
His summer-house, we understand,
  In Switzerland he's chosen.

Now from the North he's hither hied,
  To show his strength and power ;
And when he comes we stand aside,
  And look at him and cower.

— *From the German.*

THE CUCKOO.

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove !
Thou messenger of spring !
Now heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear :
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant ! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The school-boy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, the new voice of spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom
Thou fliest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird ! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear ;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year !

O could I fly, I 'd fly with thee !
We 'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the spring. —*John Logan.*

THE BROOK

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river ;
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles ;
I bubble into eddying bays ;
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my bank I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river ;
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me as I travel,
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers,
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bars ;
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on forever.

— *Alfred Tennyson.*

THE GLADNESS OF NATURE.

Is this a time to be cloudy and sad,
When our mother Nature laughs around,
When even the deep blue heavens look glad,
And gladness breathes from the blossoming ground ?

There are notes of joy from the hang-bird and wren,
And the gossip of swallows through all the sky ;
The ground-squirrel gaily chirps by his den,
And the wilding-bee hums merrily by.

The clouds are at play in the azure space,
And their shadows at play on the bright green vale,
And here they stretch to the frolic chase,
And there they roll on the easy gale.

There's a dance of leaves in that aspen bower;
There 's a titter of winds in that beechen tree:
There 's a smile on the fruit, and a smile on the flower,
And a laugh from the brook that runs to the sea.

And look at the broad-faced sun, how he smiles
  On the dewy earth that smiles in his ray,
On the leaping waters and gay young isles, —
  Ay, look, and he 'll smile thy gloom away !

—*William Cullen Bryant.*

CORN-FIELDS.

When on the breath of Autumn's breeze,
  From pastures dry and brown,
Goes floating, like an idle thought,
  The fair, white thistle-down, —
Oh, then what joy to walk at will
Upon the golden harvest-hill !

What joy in dreaming ease to lie
  Amid a field new shorn ;
And see all round, on sunlit slopes,
  The piled-up shocks of corn ;
And send the fancy wandering o'er
All pleasant harvest-fields of yore !

I feel the day ; I see the field ;
  The quivering of the leaves ;
And good old Jacob, and his horse, —
  Binding the yellow sheaves !
And at this very hour I seem
To be with Joseph in his dream !

I see the fields of Bethlehem,
And reapers many a one
Bending unto their sickles' stroke.
And Boaz looking on ;
And Ruth, the Moabitess fair,
Among the gleaners stooping there !

Again, I see a little child,
His mother's sole delight, —
God's living gift of love unto
The kind, good Shunamite ;
To mortal pangs I see him yield,
And the lad bear him from the field

The sun-bathed quiet of the hills,
The fields of Galilee,
That eighteen hundred years ago
Were full of corn, I see ;
And the dear Saviour take his way
Mid ripe ears on the Sabbath-day.

Oh golden fields of bending corn,
How beautiful they seem !
The reaper-folk, the piled-up sheaves,
To me are like a dream ;
The sunshine, and the very air
Seem of old time, and take me there !

— *Mary Howitt.*

LEGENDARY.

LEGENDARY.

AMONG GREEN PLEASANT MEADOWS.

Among green, pleasant meadows,
All in a grove so wild,
Was set a marble image
Of the Virgin and the Child.

Here oft, on summer evenings,
A lovely boy would rove,
To play beside the image
That sanctified the grove

Oft sat his mother by him,
Among the shadows dim,
And told how the Lord Jesus
Was once a child like him.

"And now from highest heaven
He doth look down each day,
And sees whate'er thou doest,
And hears what thou dost say!"

Thus spoke his tender mother;
And, on an evening bright,
When the red, round sun descended
Mid clouds of crimson light

Again the boy was playing ;
And earnestly said he,
" O beautiful child Jesus,
Come down and play with me !

" I will find thee flowers the fairest,
And weave for thee a crown ;
I will get thee ripe, red strawberries,
If thou wilt but come down.

" O holy, holy mother !
Put him down from off thy knee ;
For in these silent meadows
There are none to play with me."

Thus spoke the boy so lovely,
The while his mother heard,
And on his prayer she pondered,
But spoke to him no word.

That self-same night she dreamèd
A lovely dream of joy :
She thought she saw young Jesus
There, playing with the boy.

" And for the fruits and flowers
Which thou hast brought to me,
Rich blessing shall be given
A thousand-fold to thee.

" For in the fields of heaven
Thou shalt roam with me at will ;
And of bright fruit celestial
Thou shalt have, dear child, thy fill ! "

Thus tenderly and kindly
The fair child Jesus spoke ;
And, full of careful musings,
The anxious mother woke

And thus it was accomplished :
In a short month and a day,
That lovely boy, so gentle,
Upon his death-bed lay.

And thus he spoke, in dying :
" O mother dear, I see
The beautiful child Jesus
A-coming down to me !

" And in his hand he beareth
Bright flowers as white as snow,
And red and juicy strawberries ; —
Dear mother, let me go ! "

He died — but that fond mother
Her sorrow did restrain ;
For she knew he was with Jesus,
And she asked him not again !

— *From the German of Herder*

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON-LOW.

" And where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me ? "
" I 've been to the top of the Caldon-Low,
The midsummer night to see ! "

" And what did you see, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon-Low ? "
" I saw the blithe sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow."

'And what did you hear, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Hill?"
"I heard the drops of water made,
And I heard the corn-ears fill."

"Oh tell me all, my Mary —
All, all that ever you know;
For you must have seen the fairies
Last night on the Caldon-Low."

"Then take me on your knee, mother,
And listen, mother of mine:
A hundred fairies danced last night,
And the harpers they were nine;

"And merry was the glee of the harp-strings,
And their dancing feet so small;
But oh! the sound of their talking
Was merrier far than all!"

"And what were the words, my Mary,
That you did hear them say?"
"I'll tell you all, my mother,
But let me have my way.

"And some they played with the water
And rolled it down the hill;
And this,' they said, 'shall speedily turn
The poor old miller's mill;

"'For there has been no water
Ever since the first of May;
And a busy man shall the miller be
By the dawning of the day!

"'Oh the miller, how he will laugh,
When he sees the mill-dam rise!
The jolly old miller, how he will laugh,
Till the tears fill both his eyes!'

"And some they seized the little winds,
That sounded over the hill,
And each put a horn into his mouth,
And blew so sharp and shrill!

"'And there,' said they, 'the merry winds go
Away from every horn;
And those shall clear the mildew dank
From the blind old widow's corn:

"'Oh, the poor blind widow —
Though she has been blind so long,
She'll be merry enough when the mildew's gone,
And the corn stands stiff and strong!'

"And some they brought the brown linseed,
And flung it down from the Low:
'And this,' said they, 'by the sunrise,
In the weaver's croft shall grow!

"'Oh, the poor lame weaver!
How will he laugh outright
When he sees his dwindling flax-field
All full of flowers by night!'

"And then upspoke a brownie,
With a long beard on his chin;
'I have spun up all the tow', said he,
'And I want some more to spin.

"'I've spun a piece of hempen cloth,
And I want to spin another—
A little sheet for Mary's bed
And an apron for her mother!'

"And with that I could not help but laugh,
And I laughed out loud and free;
And then on the top of the Caldon-Low,
There was no one left but me.

"And all on the top of the Caldon-Low
The mists were cold and gray,
And nothing I saw but the mossy stones
That round about me lay.

"But, as I came down from the hill-top,
I heard, afar below,
How busy the jolly miller was,
And how merry the wheel did go!

"And I peeped into the widow's field,
And, sure enough, was seen
The yellow ears of the mildewed corn
All standing stiff and green!

"And down by the weaver's croft I stole,
To see if the flax were high;
But I saw the weaver at his gate
With the good news in his eye!

"Now, this is all that I heard, mother,
And all that I did see;
So, prithee, make my bed, mother,
For I'm tired as I can be!"

—*Mary Howitt.*

THE CHILDREN IN THE MOON.

Hearken, child, unto a story !
For the moon is in the sky,
And across her shield of silver
See two tiny cloudlets fly.

Watch them closely, mark them sharply,
As across the light they pass :
Seem they not to have the figures
Of a little lad and lass ?

See, my child, across their shoulders
Lies a little pole ! and lo !
Yonder speck is just the bucket
Swinging softly to and fro.

It is said these little children,
Many and many a summer night,
To a little well far northward
Wandered in the still moonlight.

To the wayside-well they trotted,
Filled their little buckets there ;
And the moon-man, looking downward,
Saw how beautiful they were.

Quoth the man, "How vexed and sulky
Looks the little rosy boy !
But the little handsome maiden
Trips behind him full of joy.

"To the well behind the hedgerow
Trot the little lad and maiden ;
From the well behind the hedgerow
Now the little pail is laden.

"How they please me ! how they tempt me !
Shall I snatch them up to-night ? —
Snatch them, set them here for ever
In the middle of my light ?

"Children, ay, and children's children,
Should behold my babes on high ;
And my babes should smile for ever,
Calling others to the sky !"

Thus the philosophic moon-man
Muttered many years ago ;
Set the babes, with pole and bucket,
To delight the folks below.

Never is the bucket empty,
Never are the children old ;
Ever when the moon is shining
We the children may behold.

Ever young and ever little,
Ever sweet and ever fair !
When thou art a man, my darling,
Still the children will be there.

Ever young and ever little,
They will smile when thou art old ;
When thy locks are thin and silver,
Theirs will still be shining gold.

They will haunt thee from their heaven,
  Softly beckoning down the gloom ;
Smiling in eternal sweetness
  On thy cradle, on thy tomb !

— *From the Scandinavian.*

HIAWATHA'S CHILDHOOD.

By the shores of Gitchee Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,
Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis.
Dark behind it rose the forest,
Rose the black and gloomy pine-trees,
Rose the firs with cones upon them ;
Bright before it beat the water,
Beat the clear and sunny water,
Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water.

There the wrinkled old Nokomis
Nursed the little Hiawatha,
Rocked him in his linden cradle,
Bedded soft in moss and rushes,
Safely bound with reindeer sinews ;
Stilled his fretful wail by saying,
"Hush ! the Naked Bear will hear thee !"
Lulled him into slumber, singing,
"Ewa-yea ! my little owlet !
Who is this that lights the wigwam ?
With his great eyes lights the wigwam ?
Ewa-yea ! my little owlet !"

Many things Nokomis taught him
Of the stars that shine in heaven ;
Showed him Ishkoodah, the comet
Ishkoodah, with fiery tresses ;
Showed the Death-Dance of the spirits,
Warriors with their plumes and war-clubs,
Flaring far away to northward
In the frosty nights of winter ;
Showed the broad, white road in heaven,
Pathway of the ghosts, the shadows,
Running straight across the heavens,
Crowded with the ghosts, the shadows.

At the door, on summer evenings,
Sat the little Hiawatha ;
Heard the whispering of the pine-trees,
Heard the lapping of the water,
Sounds of music, words of wonder ;
" Minnie-wawa ! " said the pine-trees,
" Mudway-aushka ! " said the water.
Saw the fire-fly Wah-wah-taysee,
Flitting through the dusk of evening,
With the twinkle of its candle
Lighting up the brakes and bushes,
And he sang the song of children,
Sang the song Nokomis taught him :
" Wah-wah-taysee, little fire-fly,
Little flitting, white-fire insect,
Little, dancing, white-fire creature,
Light me with your little candle,
Ere upon my bed I lay me,
Ere in sleep I close my eyelids ! "

Saw the moon rise from the water
Rippling, rounding from the water,
Saw the flecks and shadows on it,
Whispered, " What is that, Nokomis ? "
And the good Nokomis answered :
" Once a warrior, very angry,
Seized his grandmother, and threw her
Up into the sky at midnight ;
Right against the moon he threw her ;
'T is her body that you see there."

Saw the rainbow in the heaven,
In the eastern sky, the rainbow,
Whispered, " What is that, Nokomis ? "
And the good Nokomis answered :

"'Tis the heaven of flowers you see there;
All the wild-flowers of the forest,
All the lilies of the prairie,
When on earth they fade and perish,
Blossom in that heaven above us."

When he heard the owls at midnight,
Hooting, laughing in the forest,
"What is that?" he cried, in terror;
"What is that," he said, "Nokomis?"
And the good Nokomis answered:
"That is but the owl and owlet,
Talking in their native language,
Talking, scolding at each other."

Then the little Hiawatha
Learned of every bird its language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How they built their nests in summer,
Where they hid themselves in winter,
Talked with them whene'er he met them,
Called them "Hiawatha's Chickens."

Of all beasts he learned the language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How the beavers built their lodges,
Where the squirrels hid their acorns,
How the reindeer ran so swiftly,
Why the rabbit was so timid,
Talked with them whene'er he met them,
Called them "Hiawatha's Brothers."

— *H. W. Longfellow.*

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

Hamelin Town 's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city ;
The river Weser deep and wide
Washes its walls on the southern side ;
A pleasanter spot you never spied ;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in their cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
To the Town-hall came flocking:
"'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation — shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease!
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sat in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain —
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.

Oh, for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door, but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!

"Come in," the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow, and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek, nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in.
There was no guessing his kith and kin!
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire:
Quoth one, "It's as if my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

He advanced to the council table:
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole, the toad, the newt, the viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper.
Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham

Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats ;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre bats :
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give a thousand guilders ?"
"One ? fifty thousand !" was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while ;
Then like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled ;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe had uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered ;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling ;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling ;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling —
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails, and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives —
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped, advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished,
Save one, who stout as Julius Cæsar,

Swam across, and lived to carry
(As *he* the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples wondrous ripe
Into a cider press's gripe ;
And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter casks ;
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp, or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'Oh rats, rejoice !
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery !
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, dinner, supper, luncheon !'
And just as a bulky sugar puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious, scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me !'
I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple ;
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles !
Poke out the nests, and block up the holes !
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats !" When suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perched in the market-place,
With a "First, if you please, my thousand guilders !"

A thousand guilders ! The Mayor looked blue,
So did the Corporation too

For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Besides," quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty:
A thousand guilders! come, take fifty!"

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait! beside
I've promised to visit by dinner-time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the head-cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left in the caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor.
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion."
"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst."

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth, straight cane ;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air),
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling,
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And like fowls in a farmyard when barley is scattering
Out came the children running :
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by—
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
And now the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters !
However he turned from south to west,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed.
And after him the children pressed ;
Great was the joy in every breast.
" He never can cross that mighty top ;

He 's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop !"
When, lo ! as they reached the mountain's side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed ;
And the Piper advanced, and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain side shut fast.
Did I say, all ? No ! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way ;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say, —
" It 's dull in our town since my playmates left !
I can't forget that I 'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me :
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new ;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow-deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings ;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more ! "

The Mayor sent east, west, north, and south
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,

Wherever it was man's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he 'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 't was a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly,
If, after the day of the month and year
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
On the twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six :"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street —
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor,
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn ;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away ; —
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people, that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbors lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long ago in a mighty band,

Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

So Willy, let you and me be wipers
Of scores out with all men, — especially pipers ;
And whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice
If we 've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

— *Robert Browning.*

GREEDINESS PUNISHED.

It was the cloister Grabow, in the land of Usedom,
For years had God 's free goodness to fill its larder come :
They might have been contented !

Along the shore came swimming, to give the folks good cheer,
Who dwelt within the cloister, two fishes every year :
They might have been contented !

Two sturgeons — two great fat ones ; — and then this law was set,
That one of them should yearly be taken in a net :
They might have been contented !

The other swam away, then, until next year came round,
When, with a new companion, he punctually was found :
They might have been contented !

So then again, they caught one, and served him in the dish,
And regularly caught they, year in, year out, a fish :
They might have been contented !

The year, the time appointed *two* such noble fishes brought,
The question was a hard one, which of them should be caught :
They might have been contented !

They caught them both together — but every greedy wight
Grew sick from over-eating — it served the gluttons right ; —
They might have been contented !

This was the least of sorrows — hear how the cup ran o'er !
Henceforward, to the cloister no fish came swimming more :
They might have been contented !

So long had God supplied them of his free grace alone,
That, now it is denied them, the fault is all their own :
They might have been contented !

— *From the German of Rückert.*

THE TOY OF THE GIANT'S CHILD.

Burg Niedeck is a mountain in Alsace, high and strong,
Where once a noble castle stood, — the Giants held it long ;
Its very ruins now are lost, its site is waste and lone,
And if ye seek for Giants there, they all are dead and gone.

The Giant's daughter once came forth the castle-gate before,
And played, with all a child's delight, beside her father's door ;
Then sauntering down the precipice, the girl did gladly go,
To see, perchance, how matters went, in the little world below.

With few and easy steps she passed the mountain and the wood,
At length near Haslach, at the place where mankind dwelt, she stood ;
And many a town and village fair, and many a field so green,
Before her wondering eyes appeared, a strange and curious scene.

And as she gazed, in wonder lost, on all the scene around,
She saw a Peasant at her feet, a-tilling of the ground ;
The little creature crawled about so slowly here and there,
And, lighted by the morning sun, his plough shone bright and fair.

"Oh, pretty plaything!" cried the child, "I'll take thee home
with me,"
Then with her infant hands she spread her kerchief on her knee,
And cradling horse, and man, and plough, all gently on her arm,
She bore them home, with cautious steps, afraid to do them harm!

She hastes with joyous steps and quick; — (we know what children
are),
And spying soon her father out, she shouted from afar,
"O father, dearest father, such a plaything I have found,
I never saw so fair a one on our own mountain ground."

Her father sat at table then, and drank his wine so mild,
And, smiling with a parent's smile, he asked the happy child,
"What struggling creature hast thou brought so carefully to me?
Thou leap'st for very joy, my girl; come, open, let us see?"

She opes her kerchief carefully, and gladly, you may deem,
And shows her eager sire the plough, the Peasant, and his team;
And when she'd placed before his sight the new found pretty toy,
She clasped her hands, and screamed aloud, and cried for very joy.

But her father looked quite seriously, and shaking slow his head,
"What hast thou brought me home, my child? This is no toy," he
said;
"Go, take it quickly back again, and put it down below;
The Peasant is no plaything, girl, — how could'st thou think him so?

"Go, go, without a sigh or sob, and do my will," he said,
"For know, without the Peasant, girl, we none of us had bread;
'T is from the Peasant's hardy stock the race of Giants are;
The Peasant is no plaything, child, — no, God forbid he were!"

— *From the German of Chamisso.*

PICTURES, FANCIES, AND MEMORIES.

PICTURES, FANCIES, AND MEMORIES.

THE PIPER.

Piping down the valleys wild,
  Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child ;
  And he, laughing, said to me,

"Pipe a song about a lamb !"
  So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again !"
  So I piped ; he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe ;
  Sing thy songs of happy cheer !"
So I sang the same again,
  While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thou down, and write
  In a book, that all may read !"
So he vanished from my sight,
  And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
  And I stained the water clear ;
And I wrote my happy songs
  Every child may joy to hear.

— *William Blake.*

SONG OF THE ELFIN MILLER.

Full merrily rings the millstone round,
  Full merrily rings the wheel,
Full merrily gushes out the grist —
  Come, taste my fragrant meal !
As sends the lift its snowy drift,
  So the meal comes in a shower ;
Work, fairies, fast, for time flies past —
  I borrowed the mill an hour.

The miller he 's a worldly man,
  And maun hae double fee ;
So draw the sluice of the churl's dam,
  And let the stream come free.
Shout, fairies, shout ! see, gushing out,
  The meal comes like a river :
The top of the grain on hill and plain
  Is ours, and shall be ever.

One elf goes chasing the wild bat's wing
  And one the white owl's horn ;
One hunts the fox for the white o' his tail,
  And we winna hae him till morn.
One idle fay, with the glow-worm's ray,
  Runs glimmering 'mong the mosses :
Another goes tramp wi' the will-o-wisps' lamp,
  To light a lad to the lasses.

O haste, my brown elf, bring me corn
  From Bonnie Blackwood plains ;
Go, gentle fairy, bring me grain
  From green Dalgona mains ;

But, pride of a' at Closeburn ha',
  Fair is the corn and fatter ;
Taste fairies, taste, a gallanter grist
  Has never been wet with water.

Hilloah ! my hopper is heaped high ;
  Hark to the well-hung wheels !
They sing for joy ; the dusty roof
  It clatters and it reels.
Haste, elves, and turn yon mountain burn —
  Bring streams that shine like siller ;
The dam is down, the moon sinks soon,
  And I maun grind my miller.

Ha ! bravely done, my wanton elves,
  That is a foaming stream :
See how the dust from the mill flies,
  And chokes the cold moon-beam.
Haste, fairies, fleet come baptized feet,
  Come sack and sweep up clean,
And meet me soon, ere sinks the moon,
  In thy green vale, Dalreen.

— *Allan Cuningham.*

THE FAIRY FOLK.

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We dare n't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather !

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam ;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits ;
He is now so old and gray
He 's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses ;
Or going up with music,
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long ;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow ;
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lakes,
On a bed of flag leaves,
Watching till she wakes.

By the craggy hillside,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As dig one up in spite?
He shall find the thornies set
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We dare n't go a-hunting,
For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather !

— *William Allingham.*

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

The bonnie, bonnie bairn
Who sits with careless grace,
Glowring in the fire,
With his wee, round face,
Laughing at the gusty flame, —
What sees he there?
Ha ! the young dreamer
Builds castles in the air.

His wee, chubby face,
And his rough, curly head,
Are dancing and nodding
To the fire in its bed ;

He'll brown his rosy cheeks,
And singe his sunny hair,
Staring at the imps
With their castles in the air.

He sees lofty towers
Rising to the moon !
He sees little soldiers
Pulling them all down.
Worlds rushing up and down,
Blazing with a flare, —
See how he leaps,
As they glimmer in the air.

For all so sage he looks,
What can the laddie ken ?
He's thinking upon nothing ;
Like many mighty men.

A wee thing makes us think,
  A small thing makes us stare, —
There are more folks than him
  Building castles in the air.

Such a night in winter
  May well make him cold ;
His chin upon his chubby hand
  Will soon make him old.
His brow is smooth and broad, —
  Oh pray that busy care
Would let the wean alone
  With his castles in the air !

He 'll glower at the fire,
  And he 'll glance at the light !
But many sparkling stars
  Are swallowed up in night ;
Older eyes than his
  Are dazzled by a glare —
Hearts are broken — heads are turned
  With castles in the air.

—*James Ballantyne.*

Lady Moon

I see the Moon, and the Moon sees me;
God bless the Moon, and God bless me!

— *Old Rhyme.*

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?
Over the sea.
Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?
All that love me.

Are you not tired with rolling, and never
Resting to sleep?
Why look so pale and so sad, as forever
Wishing to weep?

Ask me not this, little child, if you love me :
You are too bold :
I must obey my dear Father above me,
And do as I'm told.

Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving ?
Over the sea.
Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving ?
All that love me.

— *Lord Houghton*

THE NEW MOON.

Dear mother, how pretty
The moon looks to-night !
She was never so cunning before ;
Her two little horns
Are so sharp and so bright,
I hope she'll not grow any more.

If I were up there,
With you and my friends,
I'd rock in it nicely, you'd see ;
I'd sit in the middle
And hold by both ends ;
Oh, what a bright cradle 'twould be !

I would call to the stars
To keep out of the way,
Lest we should rock over their toes ;
And then I would rock
Till the dawn of the day,
And see where the pretty moon goes.

And there we would stay
In the beautiful skies,
And through the bright clouds we would roam ;
We would see the sun set,
And see the sun rise,
And on the next rainbow come home.

— *Mrs. Follen.*

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT.

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat ;
They took some honey, and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the moon above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy ! O Pussy, my love !
What a beautiful Pussy you are,—
You are,
What a beautiful Pussy you are !"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!
How wonderful sweet you sing!
O let us be married, — too long we have tarried, —
But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away for a year and a day
To the land where the Bong-tree grows,
And there in a wood, a piggy-wig stood
With a ring in the end of his nose, —
His nose,
With a ring in the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?" Said the piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined upon mince and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon,
And hand in hand on the edge of the sand
They danced by the light of the moon, —
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

— *Edward Lear.*

TOPSY-TURVY WORLD.

If the butterfly courted the bee,
And the owl the porcupine;
If churches were built in the sea,
And three times one were nine;
If the pony rode his master;
If the buttercups ate the cows;
If the cat had the dire disaster
To be worried, sir, by the mouse;

If mamma, sir, sold the baby
To a gipsy for half-a-crown ;
If a gentleman, sir, was a lady, —
The world would be upside-down !
If any or all of these wonders
Should ever come about,
I should not consider them blunders,
For I should be inside-out ! —" *Lilliput Levee.*"

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS.

'T was the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads ;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap —
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprung from my bed to see what was the matter
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash,
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a lustre of mid-day to objects below ;
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name :
" Now, Dasher ! now, Dancer ! now, Prancer and Vixen !
On ! Comet, on ! Cupid, on ! Donder and Blitzen —

To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly
When they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky
So, up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With a sleigh full of toys — and St. Nicholas, too.
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound:
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot:
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.
His eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry:
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump — a right jolly old elf:
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings: then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle
But I heard him exclaim, ere they drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

— *Clement C. Moore.*

JACK FROST.

The Frost looked forth on a still, clear night,
And whispered, "Now, I shall be out of sight;
So, through the valley, and over the height,
In silence I'll take my way.
I will not go on like that blustering train,
The wind and the snow, the hail and the rain,
That make such a bustle and noise in vain;
But I'll be as busy as they!"

So he flew to the mountain, and powdered its crest
He lit on the trees, and their boughs he dressed
With diamonds and pearls; and over the breast
Of the quivering lake, he spread
A coat of mail, that it need not fear
The glittering point of many a spear
Which he hung on its margin, far and near,
Where a rock could rear its head.

He went to the window of those who slept,
And over each pane like a fairy crept:
Wherever he breathed, wherever he stepped,
By the morning light were seen
Most beautiful things! — there were flowers and trees,
There were bevies of birds, and swarms of bees;
There were cities and temples, and towers; and these
All pictured in silvery sheen!

But he did one thing that was hardly fair
He peeped in the cupboard: and finding there
That all had forgotten for him to prepare.
"Now, just to set them a-thinking,

I 'll bite this basket of fruit," said he,
" This costly pitcher I 'll burst in three !
And the glass of water they 've left for me,
Shall '*tchick*' to tell them I 'm drinking."

— *Hannah F. Gould.*

KITTY.

Alas ! little Kitty — do give her your pity !
Had lived seven years, and was never called pretty !
Her hair was bright red and her eyes were dull blue,
And her cheeks were so freckled,
They looked like the speckled
Wild-lilies, which down in the meadow-lands grew
If her eyes had been black, if she 'd only had curls
She had been, so she thought, the most happy of girls.

Her cousins around her, they pouted and fretted,
But they were all pretty and they were all petted ;
While poor little Kitty, though striving her best
To do her child's duty,
Not sharing their beauty,
Was always neglected and never caressed.
All in vain, so she thought, was she loving and true,
While her hair was bright red, and her eyes were dull blue

But one day, alone 'mid the clover-blooms sitting,
She heard a strange sound, as of wings round her flitting ;
A light not of sunbeams, a fragrance more sweet
Than the wind's, blowing over
The red-blossomed clover,
Made her thrill with delight from her head to her feet ;
And a voice, sweet and rare, whispered low in the air,
" See that beautiful, beautiful child sitting there ! "

Thrice blessed little Kitty ! She almost looked pretty !
Beloved by the angels, she needed no pity !
O juvenile charmers ! with shoulders of snow,
Ruby lips, sunny tresses, —
Forms made for caresses, —
There 's one thing, my beauties ! 'tis well you should know :
Though the world is in love with bright eyes and soft hair,
It is only *good* children the angels call fair.— *Marian Douglas.*

WHAT?

What was it that Charlie saw, to-day,
Down in the pool where the cattle lie ?
A shoal of the spotted trout at play ?
Or a sheeny dragon-fly ?

The fly and the fish were there, indeed ;
But as for the puzzle, — guess again !
It was neither a shell, nor flower, nor reed,
Nor the nest of a last year's wren.

Some willows droop to the brooklet's bed ; —
Who knows but a bee had fallen down ?
Or a spider, swung from his broken thread,
Was learning the way to drown ?

You have not read me the riddle yet.
Not even the wing of a wounded bee,
Nor the web of a spider, torn and wet,
Did Charlie this morning see.

Now answer, you who have grown so wise, —
What could the wonderful sight have been,
But the dimpled face and great blue eyes
Of the rogue who was looking in ?

— *Kate Putnam Osgood.*

ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.

Little Ellie sits alone
Mid the beeches of the meadow,
By a stream-side on the grass;
And the trees are showering down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow,
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by;
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow.
Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands, all sleek and dripping
While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,
And the smile she softly uses,
Fills the silence like a speech;
While she thinks what shall be done, —
And the sweetest pleasure chooses,
For her future within reach.

Little Ellie in her smile
Chooseth . . . . . "I will have a lover,
Riding on a steed of steeds!
He shall love me without guile:
And to *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds.

"And the steed it shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath;
And the lute he plays upon,
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death!

"And the steed it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind:
And the hoofs, along the sod,
Shall flash onward and keep measure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

"But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face:
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in;
And I kneel here for thy grace.'

"Then, ay, then — he shall kneel low,
With the red-roan steed anear him,
Which shall seem to understand —
Till I answer, 'Rise, and go!'
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand.

"Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a *yes* I must not say —
Nathless maiden-brave, 'Farewell,'
I will utter and dissemble —
'Light to-morrow with to-day.'

"Then he 'll ride among the hills
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong:
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

"Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream and climb the mountain,
And kneel down beside my feet —
'Lo! my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting!
What wilt thou exchange for it?'

"And the first time I will send
A white rose-bud for a guerdon, —
And the second time a glove:
But the third time — I may bend
From my pride, and answer — 'Pardon —
If he comes to take my love.'

"Then the young foot-page will run —
Then my lover will ride faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee:
'I am a duke's eldest son!
Thousand serfs do call me master, —
But, O Love, I love but *thee!*'

"He will kiss me on the mouth
Then; and lead me as a lover,
Through the crowds that praise his deeds;
And, when soul-tied by one troth,
Unto *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds."

Little Ellie, with her smile
Not yet ended, rose up gayly,
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe —
And went homeward, round a mile,
Just to see, as she did daily,
What more eggs were with the *two*.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse
Winding by the stream, light-hearted,
Where the ozier pathway leads —
Past the boughs she stoops — and stops !
Lo ! the wild swan had deserted —
And a rat had gnawed the reeds.

Eilie went home sad and slow :
If she found the lover ever,
With his red-roan steed of steeds,
Sooth, I know not ! but I know
She could never show him — never,
That swan's nest among the reeds.

— *Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

A MASQUERADE.

A LITTLE old woman before me
Went slowly down the street ;
Walking as if aweary
Were her feeble, tottering feet.

From under her old poke bonnet
I caught a gleam of snow,
And her waving cap string floated,
Like a pennon, to and fro.

In the folds of her rusty mantle
Sudden her footstep caught,
And I sprang to keep her from falling,
With a touch as quick as thought.

When, under the old poke bonnet,
I saw a winsome face,
Framed in with the flaxen ringlets
Of my wee daughter Grace.

Mantle and cap together
Dropped off at my very feet;
And there stood the little fairy,
Beautiful, blushing, sweet!

Will it be like this, I wonder,
When at last we come to stand
On the golden, ringing pavement
Of the blessed, blessed land?

Losing the rusty garments
We wore in the years of Time,
Will our better selves spring backward,
Serene in a youth sublime?

Instead of the shapes that hid us,
And made us old and gray,
Shall we get our child-hearts back again,
With a brightness that will stay?

I thought — but my little daughter
Slipped her dimpled hand in mine;
"I was only playing," she whispered,
"That I was ninety-nine."

LITTLE SORROW.

Among the thistles on the hill,
In tears, sat Little Sorrow;
"I see a black cloud in the west,
'T will bring a storm to-morrow.

And when it storms, where shall I be?
And what will keep the rain from me?
Woe's me!" said Little Sorrow.

"But now the air is soft and sweet,
The sunshine bright," said Pleasure;
"Here is my pipe, — if you will dance,
I'll wake my merriest measure;
Or, if you chose, we'll sit beneath
The red rose tree, and twine a wreath;
Come, come with me!" said Pleasure.

"O, I want neither dance nor flowers, —
They 're not for me," said Sorrow,
"When that black cloud is in the west,
And it will storm to-morrow!
And if it storm, what shall I do?
I have no heart to play with you, —
Go! go!" said Little Sorrow.

But lo ! when came the morrow's morn,
The clouds were all blown over ;
The lark sprang singing from his nest
Among the dewy clover ;
And Pleasure called, " Come out and dance !
To-day you mourn no evil chance ;
The clouds have all blown over ! "

" And if they have, alas ! alas !
Poor comfort that ! " said Sorrow ;
" For if to-day we miss the storm,
'T will surely come to-morrow, —
And be the fiercer for delay !
I am too sore at heart to play ;
Woe 's me ! " said Little Sorrow.

— *Marian Douglas.*

"A BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH."

In the hand — fluttering fearfully —
Lonely and helpless, — poor little thing !
In the bush — peeping out cheerfully,
Two together, gaily they sing !
Why is it best to have one in the hand ?
Father, tell me, — I don't understand.

"Best it is because you have hold of it ;
Child, it is only a figure of speech ;
Sunset shines, you look at the gold of it,
Knowing well it is out of your reach ;
But the sixpence your godmother gave,
Yours it is, to spend or to save."

Ah, that sixpence ! already I 've done with it ;
Never a penny with me will stay.
If I could buy but an inch of the sun with it,
I might look at it every day.
Father, the birds shall stay in their nest !
Things that we never can have are the best.

— *Poems written for a Child.*

THE SHADOWS.

My little boy, with pale, round cheeks,
And large, brown, dreamy eyes,
Not often, little wisehead, speaks,
But yet will make replies.

His sister, always glad to show
Her knowledge, for its praise,
Said yesterday: "God 's here, you know;
He 's everywhere, always.

"He 's in this room." His large, brown eyes
Went wandering round for God;
In vain he looks, in vain he tries,
His wits are all abroad.

"He is not here, mamma? No, no;
I do not see Him at all,
He 's not the shadows, is He?" So
His doubtful accents fall.

Fall on my heart, like precious seed,
  Grow up to flowers of love ;
For as my child, in love and need,
  Am I to Him above.

How oft before the vapors break,
  And day begins to be,
In our dim-lighted rooms we take
  The shadows, Lord, for Thee ; —

While every shadow lying there,
  Slow remnant of the night,
Is but an aching, longing prayer,
  For Thee, O Lord, the light.

— *George Macdonald.*

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD.

They say that God lives very high !
But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God. And why ?

And if you dig down in the mines,
You never see Him in the gold,
Though from Him all that 's glory shines.

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of heaven and earth across His face —
Like secrets kept, for love untold.

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills, through all things made,
Through sight and sound of every place :

As if my tender mother laid
On my shut lids, her kisses' pressure,
Half-waking me at night ; and said
"Who kissed you through the dark, dear guesser?"
— *Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

LARVÆ.

My little maiden of four years old, —
No myth, but a genuine child is she,
With her bronze-brown eyes, and her curls of gold, —
Came, quite in disgust, one day, to me.

Rubbing her shoulder with rosy palm,
(As the loathsome touch seemed yet to thrill her,)
She cried, — "Oh, mother, I found on my arm
A horrible, crawling caterpillar!"

And with mischievous smile she could scarcely smother,
Yet a look, in its daring, half-awed and shy,
She added, "While they were about it mother,
I wish they'd just finished the butterfly!"

They were words to the thoughts of the soul that turns
From the coarser form of a partial growth,
Reproaching the Infinite Patience that yearns
With an unknown glory to crown them both!

Ah, look thou largely, with lenient eyes,
On whatso beside thee may creep and cling,
For the possible beauty that underlies
The passing phase of the meanest thing!

What if God's great angels, whose waiting love
Beholdeth our pitiful life below,
From the holy height of their heaven above,
Could n't bear with the worm till the wings should grow?

— *Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

LITTLE CHRISTEL.

"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only."

I.

Going home from the house of God,
The flower at her foot, and the sun overhead,
Little Christel so thoughtfully trod,
Pondering what the preacher had said.

"Even the youngest, humblest child
Something may do to please the Lord."
"Now what," thought she, and half-sadly smiled,
"Can I, so little and poor, afford?"

"Never, never a day should pass
Without some kindness kindly shown."
Little Christel looked down at the grass
Rising like incense before the throne.

"Well, a day is before me now;
Yet what," thought she, "can I do if I try?
If an angel of God should show me how,
But silly am I, — and the hours they fly."

Then a lark sprang singing up from the sod,
And Christel thought, as he rose to the blue,
"Perhaps he will carry my prayer to God;
But who would have thought the little lark knew?"

II.

Now she entered the village street,
With book in hand and face demure;
And soon she came, with sober feet,
To a crying babe at a cottage door.

The child had a windmill that would not move :
It puffed with its round, red cheeks in vain ;
One sail stuck fast in a puzzling groove,
And baby's breath could not stir it again.

Poor baby beat the sail, and cried,
While no one came from the cottage door ;
But little Christel knelt down by its side,
And set the windmill going once more.

Then babe was pleased, and the little girl
Was glad when she heard it laugh and crow ;
Thinking, " Happy windmill, that has but to whirl,
To please the pretty young creature so ! "

III.

No thought of herself was in her head,
As she passed out at the end of the street,
And came to a rose-tree tall and red,
Drooping and faint with the summer heat.

She ran to a brook that was flowing by ;
She made of her two hands a nice round cup,
And washed the roots of the rose-tree high,
Till it lifted its languid blossoms up.

" O happy brook ! " thought little Christel,
" You have done some good this summer's day :
You have made the flower look fresh and well ! "
Then she rose, and went on her way.

IV.

But she saw, as she walked by the side of the brook,
Some great rough stones that troubled its course ;
And the gurgling water seemed to say, " Look !
I struggle, and tumble, and murmur hoarse !

"How these stones obstruct my road!
How I wish they were off and gone!
Then I could flow as once I flowed,
Singing in silvery undertone."

Then little Christel, as light as a bird,
Put off the shoes from her young white feet;
She moves two stones, she comes to a third,
The brook already sings, "Thanks to you, sweet!"

Oh! then she hears the lark in the skies,
And thinks, "What is it to God he says?"
And she stumbles and falls, and cannot rise,
For the water stifles her downward face.

The little brook flows on as before,
The little lark sings with as sweet a sound;
The little babe crows at the cottage door,
And the red rose blooms, — but Christel lies drowned.

V.

Come in softly! this is the room:
Is not that an innocent face?
Yes, those flowers give a faint perfume:
Think, child of heaven, and the Lord, — His grace

Three at the right, and three at the left,
Two at the feet, and two at the head,
The tapers burn. The friends bereft
Have cried till their eyes are swollen and red.

Who would have thought it when little Christel
Pondered on what the preacher had told?
But the good, wise God does all things well,
And the fair young creature lies dead and cold.

VI.

Then a little stream crept into the place,
And rippled up to the coffin's side,
And touched the corpse on its pale, round face,
And kissed the eyes till they trembled wide ;

Saying, "I am a river of joy from heaven ;
You helped the brook, and I help you :
I sprinkle your brow with life drops seven,
I bathe your eyes with healing dew."

Then a rose-branch in through the window came,
And colored her cheeks and lips with red :
"I remember, and heaven does the same,"
Was all that the faithful rose-branch said.

Then a bright, small form to her cold neck clung,
It breathed on her till her breast did fill ;
Saying, "I am a cherub, fond and young,
And I saw who breathed on the baby's mill."

Then little Christel sat up and smiled,
And said, "Who put these flowers in my hand?"
And rubbed her eyes, poor innocent child,
Not being able to understand.

VII.

But soon she heard the big bell of the church
Give the hour, which made her say,
"Oh! I have slept and dreamed in the porch :
It is a very drowsy day."

— "*Lilliput Levee.*"

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER, I remember
The house where I was born ;
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn ;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day ;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away !

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white,
The violets, and the lily-cups —
Those flowers made of light !
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday, —
The tree is living yet !

I remember, I remember
Where I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing ;
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow !

I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high ;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky.

It was a childish ignorance,
But now 't is little joy
To know I 'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy.

— *Thomas Hood.*

OUR HOMESTEAD.

Our old brown homestead reared its walls,
From the wayside dust aloof,
Where the apple boughs could almost cast
Their fruitage on its roof :

And the cherry-tree so near it grew,
That when awake I 've lain,
In the lonesome nights I 've heard the limbs,
As they creaked against the pane :
And those orchard trees, oh, those orchard trees !
I 've seen my little brothers rocked
In their tops by the summer breeze.

The sweet-brier under the window sill,
Which the early birds made glad,
And the damask rose by the garden fence
Were all the flowers we had.
I 've looked at many a flower since then,
Far brought, and rich, and rare,
To other eyes more beautiful
But not to me so fair ;
For those roses bright, oh, those roses bright !
I have twined them with my sister's locks,
That are laid in the dust from sight !

We had a well, a deep old well,
Where the spring was never dry,
And the cool drops down from the mossy stones
Were falling constantly :
And there never was water half so sweet
As that in my little cup,
Drawn up to the curb by the rude old sweep,
Which my father's hand set up ;
And that deep old well, oh, that deep old well !
I remember yet the plashing sound
Of the bucket as it fell

Our homestead had an ample hearth,
Where at night we loved to meet ;
There my mother's voice was always kind,
And her smile was always sweet ;

And there I 've sat on my father's knee,
  And watched his thoughtful brow,
With my childish hand in his raven hair —
  That hair is silver now !
But that broad hearth's light, oh, that broad hearth's light
  And my father's look, and my mother's smile,
They are in my heart to-night.

— *Phœbe Cary.*

THE AFTERNOON NAP.

The farmer sat in his easy chair,
  Smoking his pipe of clay,
While his hale old wife, with busy care,
  Was clearing the dinner away :
A sweet little girl with fine blue eyes,
On her grandfather's knee was catching flies.

The old man laid his hand on her head,
  With a tear on his wrinkled face ;
He thought how often, her mother, dead —
  Had sat in the self-same place ;
And the tear stole down from his half-shut eye ;
" Don't smoke ! " said the child, " how it makes you cry ! "

The house-dog lay stretched out on the floor,
  Where the shade after noon used to steal ;
The busy old wife by the open door,
  Was turning the spinning-wheel ;
And the old brass clock on the mantel-tree,
Had plodded along to almost three ;

Still the farmer sat in his easy chair,
While close to his heaving breast,
The moistened brow and the cheek so fair
Of his sweet grandchild were pressed ;
His head bent down on her soft hair, lay ; —
Fast asleep were they both, that summer day.

— *Charles G. Eastman.*

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

I love to look on a scene like this,
Of wild and careless play,
And persuade myself that I am not old,
And my locks are not yet gray ;
For it stirs the blood in an old man's heart,
And makes his pulses fly,
To catch the thrill of a happy voice,
And the light of a pleasant eye.

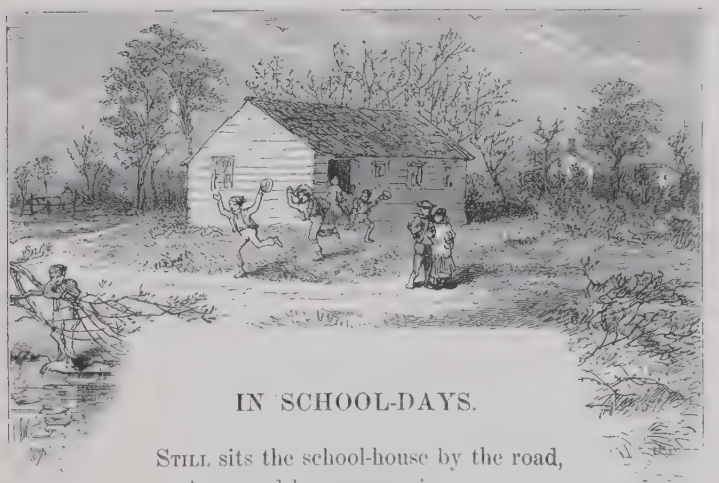
I have walked the world for fourscore years,
And they say that I am old —
That my heart is ripe for the reaper Death,
And my years are well-nigh told.
It is very true — it is very true —
I am old, and I "bide my time,"
But my heart will leap at a scene like this
And I half renew my prime.

Play on ! Play on ! I am with you there,
In the midst of your merry ring ;
I can feel the thrill of the daring jump,
And the rush of the breathless swing.

I hide with you in the fragrant hay,
  And I whoop the smothered call,
And my feet slip up on the seedy floor,
  And I care not for the fall.

I am willing to die when my time shall come,
  And I shall be glad to go —
For the world, at best, is a weary place,
  And my pulse is getting low ;
But the grave is dark, and the heart will fail
  In treading its gloomy way ;
And it wiles my heart from its dreariness
  To see the young so gay.

— *N. P. Willis.*



IN SCHOOL-DAYS.

Still sits the school-house by the road,
  A ragged beggar sunning ;
Around it still the sumachs grow
  And blackberry vines are running.

Within, the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official ;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jack-knife's carved initial ;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall :
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing !

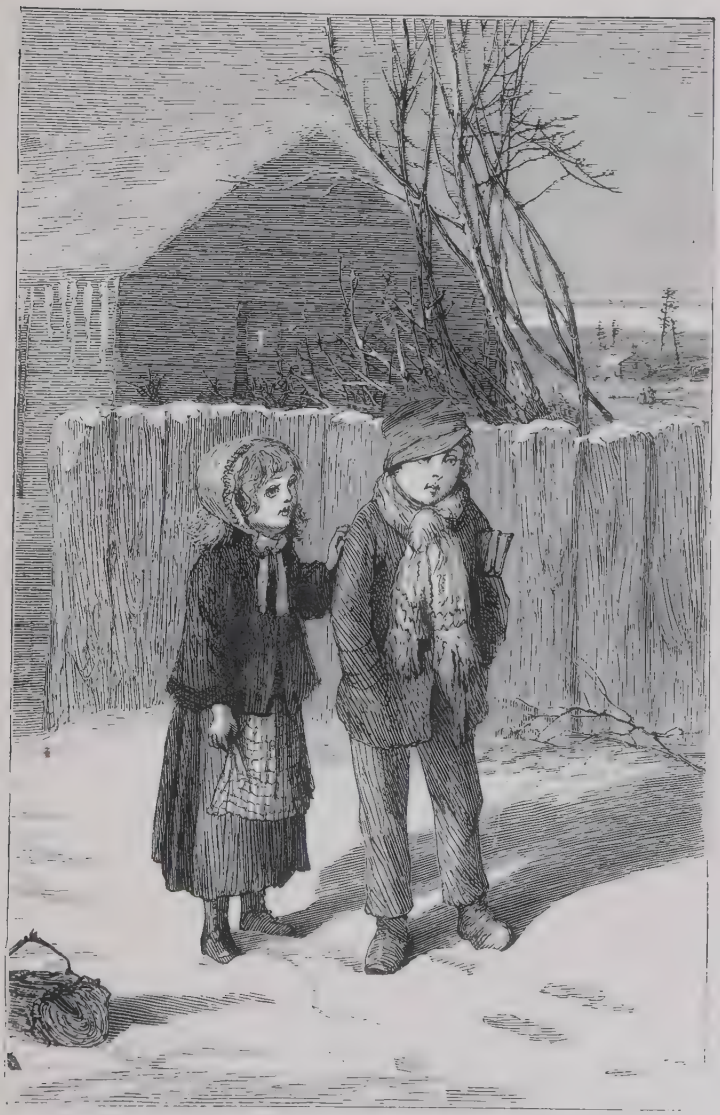
Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting ;
Lit up its western window-panes,
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favor singled ;
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left, he lingered ; —
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes ; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.



' I 'm sorry that I spelt the word :
I hate to go above you,
Because," — the brown eyes lower fell, —
" Because, you see, I love you ! "

Still memory to a gray-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl ! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing !

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her, — because they love him.

— *John G. Whittier.*

JEANIE MORRISON.

I 've wandered east, I 've wandered west,
Through mony a weary way,
But never, never can forget
The luve o' life's young day !
The fire that 's blawn on Beltane e'en
May weel be black gin yule ;
But blacker fa' awaits the heart
Where first fond luve grows cule.

O dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,
The thochts o' bygane years
Still fling their shadows ower my path,
And blind my een wi' tears :
They blind my een wi' saut, saut tears,
And sair and sick I pine,
As memory idly summons up
The blithe blinks o' lang syne.

'T was then we luvit ilk ither weel,
'T was then we twa did part ;
Sweet time — sad time ! twa bairns at scule,
Twa bairns, and but ae heart !
'T was then we sat on ae laigh bink,
To leir ilk ither lear ;
And tones, and looks, and smiles were shed,
Remembered evermair.

I wonder, Jeanie, aften yet,
When sitting on that bink,
Cheek touchin' cheek, loof locked in loof,
What our wee heads could think.
When baith bent doun ower ae braid page,
Wi' ae buik on our knee,
Thy lips were on thy lesson, but
My lesson was in thee.

O, mind ye how we hung our heads,
How cheeks brent red wi' shame,
Whene'er the scule-weans laughin' said,
We cleeked thegither hame?
And mind ye o' the Saturdays,
(The scule then skail't at noon,)
When we ran off to speel the braes, —
The broomy braes o' June?

My head rins round and round about
My heart flows like a sea,
As ane by ane the thochts rush back
O' scule-time and o' thee.
O mornin' life! O mornin' luve!
O lichtsome days and lang,
When hinnied hopes around our hearts
Like simmer blossoms sprang!

O, mind ye, luve, how aft we left
The deavin' dinsome toun,
To wander by the green burnside,
And hear its waters croon?
The simmer leaves hung ower our heads,
The flowers burst round our feet,
And in the gloamin' o' the wood
The throssil whusslit sweet.

The throssil whusslit in the wood,
The burn sang to the trees,
And we with Nature's heart in tune,
Concerted harmonies ;
And on the knowe abuve the burn,
For hours thegither sat
In the silentness o' joy, till baith
Wi' very gladness grat.

Ay, ay, dear Jeanie Morrison,
Tears trinkled doun your cheek
Like dew-beads on a rose, yet nane
Had ony power to speak !
That was a time, a blessed time,
When hearts were fresh and young,
When freely gushed all feelings forth,
Unsyllabled, — unsung !

I marvel, Jeanie Morrison,
Gin I hae been to thee
As closely twined wi' earliest thochts,
As ye hae been to me ?
O, tell me gin their music fills
Thine ear as it does mine !
O, say gin e'er your heart grows grit
Wi' dreamings o' lang syne ?

I 've wandered east, I 've wandered west,
I 've borne a weary lot ;
But in my wanderings, far or near,
Ye never were forgot.
The fount that first burst frae this heart
Still travels on its way ;
And channels deeper, as it rins,
The luve o' life's young day.

O, dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,
Since we were sindered young,
I 've never seen your face, nor heard
The music o' your tongue ;
But I could hug all wretchedness,
And happy could I die,
Did I but ken your heart still dreamed
O' bygane days and me ! — *William Motherwell*

THE LITTLE BROTHER.

Among the beautiful pictures
That hang on Memory's wall,
Is one of a dim old forest,
That seemeth the best of all ;
Not for its gnarled oaks olden,
Dark with the mistletoe ;
Not for the violets golden
That sprinkle the vale below ;
Not for the milk-white lilies
That lean from the fragrant hedge,
Coquetting all day with the sunbeams,
And stealing their golden edge ;
Not for the vines on the upland
Where the bright red berries rest ;
Nor the pinks, nor the pale, sweet cowslip,
It seemeth to me the best.

I once had a little brother
With eyes that were dark and deep ;
In the lap of that olden forest
He lieth in peace asleep ;

Light as the down of the thistle,
  Free as the winds that blow,
We roved there the beautiful summers,
  The summers of long ago ;
But his feet on the hills grew weary,
  And one of the autumn eves
I made for my little brother
  A bed of the yellow leaves.

Sweetly his pale arms folded
  My neck in a meek embrace,
As the light of immortal beauty
  Silently covered his face ;
And when the arrows of sunset
  Lodged in the tree-tops bright,
He fell, in his saint-like beauty,
  Asleep by the gates of light.
Therefore, of all the pictures
  That hang on Memory's wall,
The one of the dim old forest
  Seemeth the best of all. — *Alice Cary.*

THE GRAVES OF A HOUSEHOLD.

They grew in beauty, side by side ;
  They filled one home with glee ;
Their graves are severed far and wide,
  By mount, and stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
  O'er each fair sleeping brow ;
She had each folded flower in sight :
  Where are those sleepers now ?

One, midst the forests of the West,
By a dark stream is laid :
The Indian knows his place of rest,
Far in the cedar shade.

The sea, the lone blue sea hath one ;
He lies where pearls lie deep ;
He was the loved of all, yet none
O'er his low bed may weep.

One sleeps where southern vines are dressed
Above the noble slain ;
He wrapped the colors round his breast
On a blood-red field of Spain

And one — o'er her the myrtle showers
Its leaves by soft winds fanned ;
She faded midst Italian flowers —
The last of that fair band.

And parted thus, they rest who played
Beneath the same green tree ;
Whose voices mingled as they prayed
Around one parent knee.

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
And cheered with song the hearth ;
Alas for love ! if thou wert all,
And naught beyond, O earth ! — *Mrs. Hemans.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine.

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old moustache as I am
Is not a match for you all?

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeons
In the round tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away.

— *Henry W. Longfellow.*

FATHER IS COMING.

The clock is on the stroke of six,
The father's work is done ;
Sweep up the hearth and mend the fire,
And put the kettle on !
The wild night-wind is blowing cold,
'T is dreary crossing o'er the wold.

He 's crossing o'er the wold apace ;
He 's stronger than the storm ;
He does not feel the cold, not he,
His heart it is too warm :
For father's heart is stout and true
As ever human bosom knew.

He makes all toil, all hardship light ;
Would all men were the same,
So ready to be pleased, so kind,
So very slow to blame !
Folks need not be unkind, austere,
For love hath readier will than fear !

And we 'll do all that father likes,
  His wishes are so few !
Would they were more ! that every hour
  Some wish of his I knew !
I 'm sure it makes a happy day,
When I can please him any way.

I know he 's coming, by this sign,
  The baby 's almost wild ;
See how he laughs, and crows, and stares ; —
  Heaven bless the merry child !
He 's father's self in face and limb,
And father's heart is strong in him.

Hark ! hark ! I hear his footsteps now —
  He 's through the garden gate ;
Run, little Bess, and ope the door,
  And do not let him wait !
Shout, baby, shout, and clap thy hands !
For father on the threshold stands.

— *Mary Howitt.*

A LITTLE GOOSE.

The chill November day was done,
  The working world home faring ;
The wind came roaring through the streets,
  And set the gaslights flaring ;
And hopelessly and aimlessly,
  The scared old leaves were flying, —
When, mingled with the soughing wind,
  I heard a small voice crying.

And, shivering on the corner, stood
A child of four, or over ;
No cloak or hat her small, soft arms
And wind-blown curls to cover ;
Her dimpled face was stained with tears ;
Her round blue eyes ran over ;
She cherished in her wee, cold hand
A bunch of faded clover.

And, one hand round her treasure, while
She slipped in mine the other,
Half-scared, half-confidential, said,
"Oh ! please, I want my mother."
"Tell me your street and number, pet.
Don't cry : I'll take you to it."
Sobbing, she answered, "I forget :
The organ made me do it.

"He came and played at Miller's step, —
The monkey took the money ;
I followed down the street because
That monkey was so funny.
I've walked about a hundred hours
From one street to another ;
The monkey 's gone ; I've spoilt my flowers ; —
Oh ! please I want my mother."

"But what 's your mother's name ? and what
The street ? Now think a minute."
"My mother's name is Mother Dear ;
The street — I can't begin it."
"But what is strange about the house,
Or new, — not like the others ? "
"I guess you mean my trundle-bed, —
Mine and my little brother's.

"Oh dear! I ought to be at home
To help him say his prayers, —
He 's such a baby he forgets ;
And we are both such players ;
And there 's a bar between to keep
From pitching on each other.
For Harry rolls when he 's asleep :
Oh dear! I want my mother."

The sky grew stormy ; people passed
All muffled, homeward faring.
"You 'll have to spend the night with me,"
I said at last, despairing.
I tied a kerchief round her neck :
"What ribbon 's this, my blossom?"
"Why, don't you know!" she, smiling, said,
And drew it from her bosom.

A card with number, street, and name!
My eyes astonished met it ;
"For," said the little one, "you see
I might some time forget it,
And so I wear a little thing
That tells you all about it ;
For mother says she 's very sure,
I should get lost without it."

— *Eliza Sproat Turner.*

THE JOHNNY-CAKE.

Little Sarah she stood by her grandmother's bed,
"And what shall I get for your breakfast?" she said.
"You shall get me a johnny-cake : quickly go make it,
In one minute mix, and in two minutes bake it."

So Sarah she went to the closet to see
If yet any meal in the barrel might be.
The barrel had long time been empty as wind ;
Not a speck of the bright yellow meal could she find.
But grandmother's johnny-cake — still she must make it,
In one minute mix, and in two minutes bake it.

She ran to the shop ; but the shopkeeper said,
"I have none — you must go to the miller, fair maid ;
For he has a mill, and he'll put the corn in it,
And grind you some nice yellow meal in a minute ;
But run, or the johnny-cake, how will you make it,
In one minute mix, and in two minutes bake it?"

Then Sarah she ran every step of the way,
But the miller said, "No, I have no meal to-day ;
Run, quick, to the cornfield, just over the hill,
And if any be there, you may fetch it to mill.
Run, run, or the johnny-cake, how will you make it,
In one minute mix, and in two minutes bake it?"

She ran to the cornfield — the corn had not grown,
Though the sun in the blue sky all pleasantly shone.
"Pretty sun," cried the maiden, "please make the corn grow."
"Pretty maid," the sun answered, "I cannot do so."
"Then grandmother's johnny-cake, how shall I make it,
In one minute mix, and in two minutes bake it?"

Then Sarah looked round, and she saw what was wanted ;
The corn could not grow, for no corn had been planted.
She asked of the farmer to sow her some grain,
But the farmer he laughed till his sides ached again.
"Ho ! ho ! for the johnny-cake, — how can you make it,
In one minute mix, and in two minutes bake it?"

The farmer he laughed, and he laughed out aloud, —
"And how can I plant till the earth has been ploughed?
Run, run to the ploughman, and bring him with speed;
He 'll plough up the ground, and I 'll fill it with seed."
Away, then, ran Sarah, still hoping to make it,
In one minute mix, and in two minutes bake it.

The ploughman he ploughed, and the grain it was sown,
And the sun shed his rays till the corn was all grown.
It was ground at the mill, and again in her bed
These words to poor Sarah the grandmother said:
"You shall get me a johnny-cake — quickly go make it,
In one minute mix, and in two minutes bake it."

THANKSGIVING-DAY.

Over the river and through the wood,
To grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river and through the wood —
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes
And bites the nose,
As over the ground we go.

Over the river and through the wood,
To have a first-rate play.
Hear the bells ring,
"Ting-a-ling-ding!"
Hurrah for Thanksgiving-Day!

Over the river and through the wood
Trot fast, my dapple-gray !
Spring over the ground,
Like a hunting-hound !
For this is Thanksgiving-Day.

Over the river and through the wood,
And straight through the barn-yard gate.
We seem to go
Extremely slow, —
It is so hard to wait !

Over the river and through the wood —
Now grandmother's cap I spy !
Hurrah for the fun !
Is the pudding done ?
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie !

— *L. Maria Child.*

THE CLOCKING HEN

"Will you take a walk with me,
My little wife, to-day?
There 's barley in the barley-field,
And hay-seed in the hay."

"Thank you," said the clocking hen;
"I 've something else to do;
I 'm busy sitting on my eggs,
I cannot walk with you."

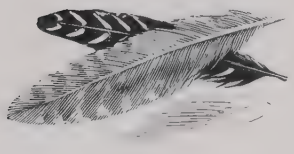
"Clock, clock, clock, clock,"
Said the clocking hen;
"My little chicks will soon be hatched,
I 'll think about it then."

The clocking hen sat on her nest,
She made it in the hay;
And warm and snug beneath her breast,
A dozen white eggs lay.

Crack, crack, went all the eggs,
Out dropt the chickens small!
"Clock," said the clocking hen,
"Now I have you all."

"Come along my little chicks,
I'll take a walk with you."
"Hollo!" said the barn-door cock,
"Cock-a-doodle-do!"

— *Aunt Effie's Rhymes.*



THE CROW'S CHILDREN.

A HUNTSMAN, bearing his gun afield,
Went whistling merrily;
When he heard the blackest of black crows
Call out from a withered tree:—

"You are going to kill the thievish birds,
And I would if I were you;
But you mustn't touch my family,
Whatever else you do!"

"I'm only going to kill the birds
That are eating up my crop;
And if your young ones do such things,
Be sure they'll have to stop."

"O," said the crow, "my children
Are the best ones ever born;
There isn't one among them all
Would steal a grain of corn."

"But how shall I know which ones they are?
Do they resemble you?"
"O no," said the crow, "they're the prettiest birds,
And the whitest that ever flew!"

So off went the sportsman, whistling,
And off, too, went his gun;
And its startling echoes never ceased
Again till the day was done.

And the old crow sat untroubled,
Cawing away in her nook;
For she said, "He'll never kill my birds,
Since I told him how they look.

"Now there's the hawk, my neighbor,
She'll see what she will see, soon;
And that saucy, whistling blackbird
May have to change his tune!"

When, lo! she saw the hunter,
Taking his homeward track,
With a string of crows as long as his gun,
Hanging down his back.

"Alack, alack!" said the mother,
"What in the world have you done?
You promised to spare my pretty birds,
And you've killed them every one."

"Your birds!" said the puzzled hunter;
"Why, I found them in my corn;
And besides, they are black and ugly
As any that ever were born!"

"Get out of my sight, you stupid!"
Said the angriest of crows;
"How good and fair the children are,
There's none but a parent knows!"

"Ah! I see, I see," said the hunter,
"But not as you do, quite;
It takes a mother to be so blind
She can't tell black from white!"

— *Phœbe Cary.*

DAME DUCK'S FIRST LECTURE ON EDUCATION.

Old Mother Duck has hatched a brood
Of ducklings small and callow;
Their little wings are short; their down
Is mottled gray and yellow.

Close by the margin of the brook
The old duck made her nest,
Of straw, and leaves, and withered grass,
And down from her own breast.

And there she sat for four long weeks,
In rainy days and fine,
Until the ducklings all came out—
Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.

One peeped out from beneath her wing,
One scrambled on her back;
"That's very rude," said old Dame Duck;
"Get off! quack, quack, quack, quack!"

"'T is close," said Dame Duck, shoving out
The egg-shells with her bill;
"Besides, it never suits young ducks
To keep them sitting still."

So rising from her nest, she said,
"Now children, look at me;
A well-bred duck should waddle so,
From side to side — d'ye see?"

"Yes," said the little ones; and then
She went on to explain:
"A well-bred duck turns in its toes
As I do — try again."

"Yes," said the ducklings, waddling on ;
"That 's better," said their mother ;
"But well-bred ducks walk in a row,
Straight — one behind another."

"Yes," said the little ducks again,
All waddling in a row :
"Now to the pond," said old Dame Duck —
Splash, splash, and in they go.

"Let me swim first," said old Dame Duck,
"To this side — now to that ;
There, snap at those great brown-winged flies,
They make young ducklings fat.

"Now when you reach the poultry-yard,
The hen-wife, Molly Head,
Will feed you with the other fowls,
On bran and mashed-up bread ;

"The hens will peck and fight, but mind,
I hope that all of you
Will gobble up the food as fast
As well-bred ducks should do.

"You 'd better get into the dish,
Unless it is too small ;
In that case, I should use my foot,
And overturn it all."

The ducklings did as they were bid,
And found the plan so good,
That from that day, the other fowls
Got hardly any food.

— *Aunt Effie's Rhymes.*

THE MOTHERLESS TURKEYS.

The White Turkey was dead! The White Turkey was dead!
How the news through the barn-yard went flying!
Of a mother bereft, four small turkeys were left,
And their case for assistance was crying.
E'en the Peacock respectfully folded his tail,
As a suitable symbol of sorrow,
And his plainer wife said, "Now the old bird is dead,
Who will tend her poor chicks on the morrow?
And when evening around them comes dreary and chill
Who above them will watchfully hover?"
"Two, each night, *I* will tuck 'neath my wings," said the Duck,
Though I've eight of my own I must cover

"I have *so much* to do! For the bugs and the worms,
In the garden, 't is tiresome pickin';
I have nothing to spare, — for my own I must care,"
Said the Hen with one chicken.

"How I wish," said the Goose, "I could be of some use,
For my heart is with love over-brimming;
The next morning that 's fine, they shall go with my nine
Little, yellow-backed goslings, out swimming!"
"I will do what I can," the old Dorking put in,
"And for help they may call upon me too,
Though I've ten of my own that are only half grown,
And a great deal of trouble to see to.
But those poor little things, they are all heads and wings,
And their bones through their feathers are stickin'!"
"Very hard it may be, but, O, don't come to me!"
Said the Hen with one chicken.

"Half my care, I suppose, there is nobody knows, —
I'm the most overburdened of mothers!
They must learn, little elves! how to scratch for themselves,
And not seek to depend upon others."
She went by with a cluck, and the Goose to the Duck
Exclaimed, in surprise, "Well, I never!"
Said the Duck, "I declare, those who have the least care,
You will find, are complaining forever!
And when all things appear to look threatening and drear,
And when troubles your pathway are thick in,
For aid in your woe, O, beware how you go
To a Hen with one chicken!"

— *Marian Douglas.*

THE WATER-MILL.

"Any grist for the mill?"
How merrily it goes!
Flap, flap, flap, flap,
While the water flows.
Round about and round about,
The heavy mill-stones grind,
And the dust flies all about the mill,
And makes the miller blind.

"Any grist for the mill?"
The jolly farmer packs
His wagon with a heavy load
Of very heavy sacks.
Noisily, oh noisily,
The mill-stones turn about;
You cannot make the miller hear,
Unless you scream and shout.

"Any grist for the mill?"
How quickly it goes round,
Splash, splash, splash, splash,
With a whirring sound.
Farmers, bring your corn to-day,
And bakers bring your flour;
Dusty millers, work away,
While it is in your power.

"Any grist for the mill?"
Alas! it will not go;
The river, too, is standing still;
The ground is white with snow.

And when the frosty weather comes,
  And freezes up the streams,
The miller only hears the mill,
  And grinds the corn in dreams.

Living close beside the mill,
  The miller's girls and boys
Always play at make-believe,
  Because they have no toys.
"Any grist for the mill?"
  The elder brothers shout,
While all the little petticoats
  Go whirling round about.

The miller's little boys and girls
  Rejoice to see the snow;
"Good father, play with us to-day;
  You cannot work, you know.
We will be the mill-stones,
  And you shall be the wheel;
We 'll pelt each other with the snow.
  And it shall be the meal."

Oh, heartily the miller's wife
  Is laughing at the door;
She never saw the mill worked
  So merrily before.
"Bravely done, my little lads,
  Rouse up the lazy wheel!
For money comes but slowly in
  Where snow-flakes are the meal."

— *Aunt Effie's Rhymes*

CHARLEY, THE STORY-TELLER.

Charles was a very wayward youth,
Who to his parents ne'er spoke truth.
It matters not, thought he, forsooth,
When no one knows : if I tell lies
They are not written in my eyes !

His mother once some questions asked,
And artful Charles his cunning tasked ;
When loud the parrot chuckling cried,
"You little rogue ! may woe betide !
For, Charley, you've been fibbing !"

Then from the corner comes the cat,
And gives Mamma a gentle pat ;
"Good lady, he's deceiving you."
She purrs aloud ; "Mew, mew, mew, mew !
For Charley has been fibbing !"

Down stairs now frightened Charley steals,
As though ten cats were at his heels ;
When by his coat Tray seizes him,
And cries ; " Bow, wow ! " in accents grim,
" Fie, Charley, you've been fibbing ! "

Now both with shame and anger red,
That e'en the cock and hens upbraid,
He seeks the garden's safe retreat ;
But twittering birds there cry : " Tweat, tweat !
Fie, Charley, you've been fibbing ! "

He runs at last from out the town,
And near a village sits him down ;
But even there a fly soon comes,
Who buzzes round his nose and hums :
" Fie, Charley, you've been fibbing ! "

He now the blessed world runs round,
But rest for him is no where found ;
Go where he will, his ears still greet,
" Mew, mew — bow, wow — buzz, buzz — tweat, tweat !
Fie, Charley, you've been fibbing ! "

— *From the German.*

THE LITTLE NURSE.

"Why do you sit in the dull house, Annie ?
See what a parcel of flowers I've found —
Columbines, violets, snow-drops, quakers,
And cowslips that grow in the meadow ground.

"The boys are flying their kites, or playing
As merry as crickets at bat and ball ;
And the girls are playing at jars of honey,
But you, you are moping away from all."

"I *must* stay in the house all day," said Annie,
"Till mother comes home from her work at night :
Your voices sound through the open window,
And I can see that the sky is bright.

"I wish I were out there playing with you ;
I wish I were one of the honey jars ;
I wish, — but I might as well be wishing
To play a game with the moon and stars.

"For here in the bed poor Jane lies moaning,
And no kith nor kin in the world has she ;
And mother says that our Father in Heaven
Has given the care of poor Jane to me.

"All day my mother is out at washing,
To earn our clothes, and our rent, and our food ;
So I cannot play at jars of honey,
Or find sweet flowers, or hide in the wood."

"But your mother's at work a mile from the village,
And no one would know it," said Kitty Ray.
"And as for Jane, she never would miss you
If you took an hour from the tedious day."

"Though I am sometimes tempted," said Annie,
"I put the wrong thoughts away from my mind :
And I would not deceive my Mother, Kitty,
For then no pleasure or peace should I find.

"Many a time I have thought of running, —
And have put on my bonnet and tied the strings, —
Of running up the hill by the river,
Like a bird that flies with feathery wings.

"But then I thought that poor Jane might suffer
For a glass of water while I was gone ;
Or, asking about the time or the weather,
And getting no answer, might feel forlorn.

"And often when I am tired and longing
To steal away to the beautiful wood,
I think how glad it will make the Saviour
To see me sitting here patient and good.

"And I think if He were to enter the chamber
As he entered the houses of Galilee,
How I should wish to hear Him saying
'Well done, faithful child,' to me."

There she sat in the soft spring weather,
Prisoned from treading the fresh green earth.
Only ten years have the seasons numbered,
Since the watching angels recorded her birth.

Not as the rich grow, to ease and pleasure,
Grew she, — but to labor and to endure.
And Christ, who once blessed the little children
Blesses them still — the rich and the poor.

BENNY.

I had told him, Christmas morning,
As he sat upon my knee,
Holding fast his little stockings,
Stuffed as full as full could be,
And attentive, listening to me,
With a face demure and mild,
That old Santa Claus, who filled them,
Did not love a naughty child.

"But we'll be good, won't we, Moder?"
And from off my lap he slid,
Digging deep among the goodies
In his crimson stockings hid,
While I turned me to my table,
Where a tempting goblet stood,
With a dainty drink brimmed over,
Sent me by a neighbor good.

But the kitten, there before me,
With his white paw, nothing loth,
Sat by way of entertainment,
Slapping off the shining froth;
And in not the gentlest humor
At the loss of such a treat,
I confess, I rather rudely
Thrust him out into the street.

Then how Benny's blue eyes kindled!
Gathering up the precious store,
He had busily been pouring
In his tiny pinafore

With a generous look that shamed me,
Sprang he from the carpet bright,
Showing by his mien indignant,
All a baby's sense of right.

"Come back, Harney," called he loudly,
As he held his apron white,
"You sall have my candy wabbit!"
But the door was fastened tight;
So he stood, abashed and silent,
In the centre of the floor,
With defeated look alternate
Bent on me and on the door.

Then, as by some sudden impulse,
Quickly ran he to the fire,
And while eagerly his bright eyes
Watched the flames go higher and higher,
In a brave, clear key, he shouted,
Like some lordly little elf,
"Santa Kaus, come down de chimney,
Make my moder 'have herself!"

"I will be a good girl, Benny,"
Said I, feeling the reproof;
And straightway recalled poor Harney
Mewing on the gallery roof.
Soon the anger was forgotten,
Laughter chased away the frown,
And they gambolled 'neath the live-oaks
Till the dusky night came down.

In my dim, fire-lighted chamber,
Harney purred beneath my chair,
And my play-worn boy beside me,
Knelt to say his evening prayer:

"God bess fader, God bess moder,
God bess sister" — then a pause,
And the sweet young lips devoutly
Murmured: "God bess Santa Kaus."

He is sleeping: brown and silken
Lie the lashes, long and meek,
Like caressing, clinging shadows
On his plump and peachy cheek;
And I bend above him, weeping
Thankful tears, O Undefiled!
For a woman's crown of glory,
For the blessing of a child.

SUNDAY MORNING.

"Well," Saturday to Sunday said,
"The people now have gone to bed;
All, after toiling through the week,
Right willingly their rest would seek; —
Myself can hardly stand alone,
So very weary I have grown."

His speech was echoed by the bell,
As on his midnight couch he fell;
And Sunday now the watch must keep.
So, rising from his pleasant sleep,
He glides, half-dozing, through the sky,
To tell the world that morn is nigh.

He rubs his eyes, — and, none too late,
Knocks aloud at the sun's bright gate;
She slumbered in her silent hall,
Unprepared for his early call.

Sunday exclaims, "Thy hour is nigh!"
"Well, well," says she, "I'll come by-and-by."

Gently, on tiptoe, Sunday creeps, —
Cheerfully from the stars he peeps, —
Mortals are all asleep below, —
None in the village hears him go;
E'en chanticleer keeps very still, —
For Sunday whispered 't was his will.

Now the world is awake and bright,
After refreshing sleep all night;
The Sabbath morn in sunlight comes,
Smiling gladly on all our homes.
He has a mild and happy air, —
Bright flowers are wreathed among his hair.

He comes, with soft and noiseless tread,
To rouse the sleeper from his bed;
And tenderly he pauses near,
With looks all full of love and cheer,
Well pleased to watch the deep repose
That lingered till the morning rose

How gaily shines the early dew,
Loading the grass with its silver hue!
And freshly comes the fragrant breeze,
Dancing among the cherry-trees;
The bees are humming all so gay, —
They know not it is Sabbath-day.

The cherry-blossoms now appear, —
Fair heralds of a fruitful year;
There stands upright the tulip proud, —
Bethlehem-stars around her crowd, —
And hyacinths of every hue, —
All sparkling in the morning dew.

How still and lovely all things seem !
Peaceful and pure as an angel's dream !
No rattling carts are in the streets ; —
Kindly each one his neighbor meets : —
" It promises right fair to-day ; " —
" Yes, praised be God ! " — 't is all they say.

The birds are singing, " Come, behold
Our Sabbath morn all bathed in gold,
Pouring his calm, celestial light
Among the flowers so sweet and bright ! "
The pretty goldfinch leads the row,
As if her Sunday-robe to show.

Mary, pluck those auriculas, pray,
And don't shake the yellow dust away ;
Here, little Ann, are some for you, —
I 'm sure you want a nosegay too.
The first bell rings, — away ! away !
We will go to church to-day.

— *From the German of Hebel.*

WE ARE SEVEN.

A SIMPLE child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death ?

I met a little cottage girl :
She was eight years old, she said ;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad ;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair ; —
Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be ?"
"How many ! Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they ? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we ;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother ;
And in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven ! I pray you tell,
Sweet maid, how this may be ?"

Then did the little maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we ;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree."

"You run about, my little maid ;
Your limbs they are alive ;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

"And often after sunset, sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her from her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the churchyard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead ; those two are dead ;
Their spirits are in heaven ! "
'T was throwing words away ; for still
The little maid would have her will ;
And said, "Nay, we are seven ! "

— *William Wordsworth.*

THE CHILD-JUDGE.

"WHERE hast thou been toiling all day, sweetheart,
That thy brow is burdened and sad ?
The Master's work may make weary feet,
But it leaves the spirit glad.

"Was thy garden nipped with the midnight frost,
Or scorched with the midday glare ?
Were thy vines laid low, or thy lilies crushed,
That thy face is so full of care ? "

"No pleasant garden-toils were mine ! —
I have sat on the judgment-seat,
Where the Master sits at eve and calls
The children around his feet."

"How camest thou on the judgment-seat,
Sweetheart ? who set thee there ?
'T is a lonely and lofty seat for thee,
And well might fill thee with care."

"I climbed on the judgment-seat myself,
I have sat there alone all day ;
For it grieved me to see the children around
Idling their life away

"They wasted the Master's precious seed,
They wasted the precious hours;
They trained not the vines, nor gathered the fruits,
And they trampled the sweet, meek flowers."

"And what hast thou done on the judgment-seat,
Sweetheart? what didst thou there?
Would the idlers heed thy childish voice?
Did the garden mend by thy care?"

"Nay, that grieved me more! I called and I cried,
But they left me there forlorn.
My voice was weak, and they heeded not,
Or they laughed my words to scorn."

"Ah, the judgment-seat was not for thee,
The servants were not thine!
And the eyes which adjudge the praise and the blame
See further than thine or mine.

"The voice that shall sound at eve, sweetheart,
Will not raise its tones to be heard:
It will hush the earth and hush the hearts,
And none will resist its word."

"Should I see the Master's treasures lost,
The stores that should feed his poor,
And not lift my voice, be it weak as it may,
And not be grievèd sore?"

"Wait till the evening falls, sweetheart, —
Wait till the evening falls;
The Master is near and knoweth all,
Wait till the Master calls.

"But how fared thy garden-plot, sweetheart,
Whilst thou sat'st on the judgment-seat?
Who watered thy roses, and trained thy vines,
And kept them from careless feet?"

"Nay, that is the saddest of all to me!
That is the saddest of all!
My vines are trailing, my roses are parched,
My lilies droop and fall."

"Go back to thy garden-plot, sweetheart,
Go back till the evening falls!
And bind thy lilies, and train thy vines,
Till for thee the Master calls.

"Go make thy garden fair as thou canst,
Thou workest never alone;
Perchance he whose plot is next to thine
Will see it, and mend his own.

"And the next may copy his, sweetheart,
Till all grows fair and sweet;
And when the Master comes at eve,
Happy faces his coming will greet.

"Then shall thy joy be full, sweetheart,
In the garden so fair to see,
In the Master's words of praise for all,
In a look of his own for thee."

AVIS.

I MAY not rightly call thy name,—
Alas! thy forehead never knew
The kiss that happier children claim,
Nor glistened with baptismal dew.

Daughter of want, and wrong, and woe,
I saw thee with thy sister-band,
Snatched from the whirlpool's narrowing flow
By mercy's strong yet trembling hand.

"Avis!" — With Saxon eye and cheek,
At once a woman and a child,
The saint uncrowned I came to seek
Drew near to greet us, — spoke, and smiled.

God gave that sweet sad smile she wore
All wrong to shame, all souls to win, —
A heavenly sunbeam sent before
Her footsteps through a world of sin.

"And who is Avis?" — Hear the tale
The calm-voiced matrons gravely tell, —
The story known through all the vale
Where Avis and her sisters dwell.

With the lost children running wild,
Strayed from the hand of human care,
They find one little refuse child
Left helpless in its poisoned lair.

The primal mark is on her face, —
The chattel-stamp, — the pariah-stain
That follows still her hunted race, —
The curse without the crime of Cain.

How shall our smooth-turned phrase relate
The little suffering outcast's ail?
Not Lazarus at the rich man's gate
So turned the rose-wreathed revelers pale.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara
Came Chanticleer's muffled crow ;
The stiff rails were softened to swan's-down,
And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window
The noiseless work of the sky,
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,
Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn
Where a little headstone stood, —
How the flakes were folding it gently,
As did robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our own little Mabel,
Saying, "Father, who makes it snow ?"
And I told of the good All-father
Who cares for us here below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall,
And thought of the leaden sky
That arched o'er our first great sorrow,
When that mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience
That fell from that cloud like snow,
Flake by flake, healing and hiding
The scar of our deep-plunged woe.

And again to the child I whispered,
"The snow that husheth all,
Darling, the merciful Father
Alone can make it fall !"

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her ;
And she, kissing back, could not know
That *my* kiss was given to her sister,
Folded close under deepening snow.

—*James Russell Lowell.*

CHILD AND MOTHER.

Love thy mother, little one !
Kiss and clasp her neck again !
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.
Love thy mother, little one !

Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee !
Hereafter thou may 'st shudder sighs
To meet them when they cannot see.
Gaze upon her living eyes !

Press her lips, the while they glow,
With love that they have often told !
Hereafter thou may 'st press in woe,
And kiss them till thine own are cold.
Press her lips, the while they glow !

Oh, revere her raven hair, —
Although it be not silver gray !
Too early, Death, led on by care,
May snatch save one dear lock away.
Oh, revere her raven hair !

Pray for her at eve and morn,
That Heaven may long the stroke defer ;
For thou may 'st live the hour forlorn,
When thou wilt ask to die with her.
Pray for her at eve and morn !

— *Thomas Hood.*

A COMFORTER.

"Will she come to me, little Effie?
Will she come in my arms to rest,
And nestle her head on my shoulder,
While the sun goes down in the west?

"I and Effie will sit together,
All alone, in this great arm-chair: —
Is it silly to mind it, darling,
When life is so hard to bear?

"No one comforts me like my Effie;
Yet I think she does not try, —
Only looks with a wistful wonder
Why grown people should ever cry;

"While her little soft arms close tighter
Round my neck in their clinging hold; —
Well, I must not cry on your hair, dear,
For my tears might tarnish the gold.

"I am tired of trying to read, dear;
It is worse to talk and seem gay:
There are some kinds of sorrow, Effie,
It is useless to thrust away.

"But my comforter knows a lesson
Wiser, truer than all the rest: —
That to help and heal a sorrow,
Love and silence are always best.

"Well, who is my comforter — tell me?
Effie smiles, but she will not speak;
Or look up through the long curled lashes
That are shading her rosy cheek.

"Is she thinking of talking fishes,
The blue-bird, or magical tree?
Perhaps *I* am thinking, my darling,
Of something that never can be.

"You long — don't you, dear, — for the Genii,
Who were slaves of lamps and of rings?
And I — I am sometimes afraid, dear,
I want as impossible things.

"But hark! there is Nurse calling Effie!
It is bedtime, so run away!
And I must go back, or the others
Will be wondering why I stay.

"So good-night to my darling Effie;
Keep happy, sweetheart, and grow wise!
Here's one kiss for her golden tresses,
And two for her sleepy eyes."

— *Adelaide Anne Proctor.*

A STORY BY THE FIRE.

Children love to hear of children!
I will tell of a little child
Who dwelt alone with his mother
By the edge of a forest wild.

One summer's eve from the forest,
Late, late, down the grassy track,
The child came back with lingering step,
And looks oft turning back

"Oh, mother!" he said, "in the forest
I have met with a little child;
All day he played with me — all day
He talked with me and smiled.
At last he left me alone, but then
He gave me this rosebud red;
And said he would come to me again
When all its leaves were spread.

"I will put my rosebud in a glass,
I will watch it night and day,
Dear little friend, wilt thou come again?
Wilt thou come by my side to play?
I will seek for strawberries — the best
Of all shall be for thee;
I will show thee the eggs in the linnet's nest
None knoweth of but me."

At noon, beside the window-sill,
Awoke a bird's clear song;
But all within the house was still,
The child was sleeping long.
The mother went to his little room —
With all its leaves outspread
She saw a rose in fullest bloom;
And, in the little bed,
A child that did not breathe or stir,
A little, happy child,
Who had met his little friend again,
And in the meeting smiled.

— *Dora Greenwell.*

A NIGHT WITH A WOLF.

Little one, come to my knee!
Hark how the rain is pouring
Over the roof, in the pitch-black night,
And the wind in the woods a-roaring!

Hush, my darling, and listen,
Then pay for the story with kisses:
Father was lost in the pitch-black night,
In just such a storm as this is!

High up on the lonley mountains,
Where the wild men watched and waited;
Wolves in the forest, and bears in the bush,
And I on my path belated.

The rain and the night together
Came down, and the wind came after,
Bending the props of the pine-tree roof,
And snapping many a rafter.

I crept along in the darkness,
Stunned, and bruised, and blinded—
Crept to a fir with thick-set boughs,
And a sheltering rock behind it.

There, from the blowing and raining,
Crouching, I sought to hide me:
Something rustled, two green eyes shone,
And a wolf lay down beside me.

Little one, be not frightened :
I and the wolf together,
Side by side, through the long, long night
Hid from the awful weather.

His wet fur pressed against me ;
Each of us warmed the other ;
Each of us felt, in the stormy dark,
That beast and man was brother.

And when the falling forest
No longer crashed in warning,
Each of us went from our hiding-place
Forth in the wild, wet morning.

Darling, kiss me in payment !
Hark, how the wind is roaring ;
Father's house is a better place
When the stormy rain is pouring !

— *Bayard Taylor.*

LOST ON THE PRAIRIE.

Oh, my baby, my child, my darling !
Lost and gone in the prairie wild ;
Mad gray wolves from the forest snarling,
Snarling for thee, my little child !

Lost, lost ! gone forever !
Gay snakes rattled, and charmed, and sung ;
On thy head the sun's fierce fever,
Dews of death on thy white lip hung !

Dead and pale in the moonlight's glory,
  Cold and dead by the black oak-tree ;
Only a small shoe, stained and gory,
  Blood-red, tattered, comes home to me.

Over the grass that rolls, like ocean,
  On and on to the blue, bent sky,
Something comes with a hurried motion,
  Something calls with a choking cry, —

"Here, here ! not dead, but living !"
  God ! Thy goodness — what can I pray ?
Blessed more in this second giving,
  Laid in happier arms to-day.

Oh, my baby, my child, my darling !
  Wolf, and snake, and the lonely tree
Still are rustling, hissing, snarling ;
  Here 's my baby come back to me !

— *Rose Terry.*

LUCY GRAY.

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray ;
  And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see, at break of day,
  The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew ;
  She dwelt on a wide moor, —
The sweetest thing that ever grew
  Beside a human door.

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green ;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night, —
You to the town must go ;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, father, will I gladly do ;
'T is scarcely afternoon, —
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon ! "

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band.
He plied his work ; — and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe : —
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time ;
She wandered up and down ;
And many a hill did Lucy climb,
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide ;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide

At daybreak on the hill they stood
That overlooked the moor ;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept, — and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet ;" —
When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small ;
And through the broken hawthorn-hedge
And by the low stone wall.

And then an open field they crossed —
The marks were still the same :
They tracked them on, nor ever lost ;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank ;
And further there were none !

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child ;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind ;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

— *William Wordsworth.*

THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER.

We were crowded in the cabin,
Not a soul would dare to sleep, —
It was midnight on the waters,
And a storm was on the deep.

'T is a fearful thing in winter,
To be shattered by the blast,
And to hear the rattling trumpet
Thunder, "Cut away the mast!"

So we shuddered there in silence, —
For the stoutest held his breath,
While the hungry sea was roaring,
And the breakers talked with Death.

As thus we sat in darkness,
Each one busy with his prayers,
"We are lost!" the captain shouted,
As he staggered down the stairs.

But his little daughter whispered,
As she took his icy hand,
"Isn't God upon the ocean,
Just the same as on the land?"

Then we kissed the little maiden,
And we spoke in better cheer,
And we anchored safe in harbor
When the morn was shining clear.

— *James T. Fields.*

THE GRAY SWAN.

"Oh! tell me, sailor, tell me true,
Is my little lad, my Elihu,
A-sailing with your ship?"
The sailor's eyes were dim with dew, —
"Your little lad, your Elihu?"
He said with trembling lip, —
"What little lad? What ship?"

"What little lad? as if there could be
Another such a one as he!
What little lad, do you say?
Why, Elihu, that took to the sea
The moment I put him off my knee!
It was just the other day
The Gray Swan sailed away!"

"The other day?" The sailor's eyes
Stood open with a great surprise: —
"The other day? — the Swan?"
His heart began in his throat to rise.
"Ay, ay, sir! here in the cupboard lies
The jacket he had on!" —
"And so your lad is gone?"

"Gone with the Swan?" — "And did she stand
With her anchor clutching hold of the sand,
For a month, and never stir?"
"Why, to be sure! I've seen from the land,
Like a lover kissing his lady's hand,
The wild sea kissing her,
A sight to remember, sir!"

"But, my good mother, do you know
All this was twenty years ago?
I stood on the Gray Swan's deck,
And to that lad I saw you throw,
Taking it off, as it might be, so!
The kerchief from your neck."—
"Ay, and he'll bring it back!"

"And did the little lawless lad,
That has made you sick and made you sad,
Sail with the Gray Swan's crew?"
"Lawless! The man is going mad!
The best boy ever mother had:—
Be sure he sailed with the crew!
What would you have him do?"

"And he has never written line,
Nor sent you word nor made you sign,
To say he was alive?"
"Hold! if 't was wrong, the wrong is mine;
Besides, he may be in the brine;
And could he write from the grave?
Tut, man! What would you have?"

"Gone, twenty years,—a long, long cruise,
'T was wicked thus your love to abuse!
But if the lad still live,
And come back home, think you, you can
Forgive him?"—"Miserable man!
You 're mad as the sea, you rave—
What have I to forgive?"

The sailor twitched his shirt so blue,
And from within his bosom drew
The kerchief. She was wild.

"O God, my Father! is it true?
My little lad, my Elihu!
My blessed boy, my child!
My dead, my living child!"

—*Alice Cary.*

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

It was a summer's evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet,
In playing there, had found.
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And, with a natural sigh,
"'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory!"

"I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out;
For many thousand men," said he,
"Were slain in that great victory!"

"Now, tell us what 't was all about,
Young Peterkin he cries ;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes ;
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they killed each other for ?"

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
"Who put the French to rout ;
But what they killed each other for
I could not well make out.
But everybody said," quoth he,
"That 't was a famous victory !

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by :
They burned his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly ;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

"With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide ;
And many a childing mother then
And new-born baby died.
But things, like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

"They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won ;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun.
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

"Great praise the Duke of Marlborough won,
And our good Prince Eugene."
"Why, 't was a very wicked thing!"
Said little Wilhelmine.
"Nay, nay, my little girl," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory!

"And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."
"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he,
"But 't was a famous victory!"

— *Robert Southey.*

JOHN GILPIN.

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London Town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise ; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend, the Calender,
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said ;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife ;
O'erjoy'd was he to find
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in,
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad;
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin, at his horse's side,
Seiz'd fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again,

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'T was long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty, screaming, came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he, "yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone-bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, "Fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought ;
Away went hat and wig ;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung ;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all ;
And every soul cried out, " Well done !
As loud as he could bawl."

Away went Gilpin — who but he ?
His fame soon spread around,
" He carries weight ! he rides a race !
'T is for a thousand pound ! "

And still as fast as he drew near,
'T was wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced ;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay ;

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin ! — Here 's the house" —
They all aloud did cry ;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired ;"
Said Gilpin, "So am I !"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclin'd to tarry there ;
For why ? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong ;
So did he fly — which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till, at his friend the Calender's,
His horse at last stood still.

The Calender, amazed to see
His neighbor in such a trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate
And thus accosted him :

"What news ! what news ? your tidings tell ;
Tell me you must and shall —
Say, why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all ?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke ;
And thus unto the Calender,
In merry guise, he spoke :

"I came because your horse would come ;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road."

The Calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in ;

Whence straight he came, with hat and wig,
A wig that flowed behind ;
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit ;
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dust away,
That hangs upon your face ;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So, turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine ;
'T was for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast !
For which he paid full dear ;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear ;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig ;
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why ? — they were too big.

Now Mrs. Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half-a-crown ;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
" This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain ;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein ;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The rumbling of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They rais'd a hue and cry : —

"Stop thief! — stop thief! — a highwayman!"
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way,
Did join in the pursuit

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space:
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too
For he got first to town;
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see. —*William Cowper.*

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

"Will you walk into my parlor?"
Said a spider to a fly;
"'T is the prettiest little parlor
That ever you did spy
The way into my parlor
Is up a winding stair,
And I have many pretty things
To show when you are there."
"Oh no, no!" said the little fly,
"To ask me is in vain;
For who goes up your winding stair,
Can ne'er come down again."

SPIDER'S
GARDEN

"I'm sure you must be weary
With soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?"
Said the spider to the fly.
"There are pretty curtains drawn around,
The sheets are fine and thin;
And if you like to rest awhile,
I'll snugly tuck you in."
"Oh no, no!" said the little fly,
"For I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again,
Who sleep upon your bed."

Said the cunning spider to the fly,
"Dear friend, what shall I do,
To prove the warm affection,
I've always felt for you?
I have, within my pantry,
Good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome —
Will you please to take a slice?"
"Oh no, no!" said the little fly,
"Kind sir, that cannot be;
I've heard what's in your pantry,
And I do not wish to see."

"Sweet creature," said the spider,
"You're witty and you're wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings,
How brilliant are your eyes.
I have a little looking-glass
Upon my parlor shelf;
If you'll step in one moment, dear,
You shall behold yourself."

"I thank you, gentle sir," she said,
"For what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good-morning, now,
I'll call another day."

The spider turned him round about,
And went into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly
Would soon be back again;
So he wove a subtle thread
In a little corner sly,
And set his table ready
To dine upon the fly.
He went out to his door again,
And merrily did sing,
"Come hither, hither, pretty fly,
With the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple,
There's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright,
But mine are dull as lead."

Alas, alas! how very soon
This silly little fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words,
Came slowly flitting by:
With buzzing wings she hung aloft,
Then near and nearer drew —
Thought only of her brilliant eyes,
And green and purple hue;
Thought only of her crested head, —
Poor foolish thing! At last
Up jumped the cunning spider,
And fiercely held her fast.

He dragged her up his winding stair,
Into his dismal den
Within his little parlor — but
She ne'er came out again !
And now, dear little children
Who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words,
I pray you, ne'er give heed :
Unto an evil counsellor
Close heart and ear and eye,
And learn a lesson from this tale
Of the spider and the fly.

— *Mary Howitt.*

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE SQUIRREL.

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter " Little prig ;"
Bun replied,
" You are doubtless very big,
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year,
And a sphere :
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I 'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry ;
I 'll not deny you make

A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ ; all is well and wisely put ;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

— *R. W. Emerson.*

LITTLE BROWN HANDS.

They drive home the cows from the pasture,
Up through the long shady lane,
Where the quail whistles loud in the wheat-fields,
That are yellow with ripening grain.
They find, in the thick waving grasses,
Where the scarlet-lipped strawberry grows.
They gather the earliest snowdrops,
And the first crimson buds of the rose.

They toss the new hay in the meadow ;
They gather the elder-bloom white ;
They find where the dusky grapes purple
In the soft-tinted October light.
They know where the apples hang ripest,
And are sweeter than Italy's wines ;
They know where the fruit hangs the thickest
On the long, thorny blackberry-vines.

They gather the delicate sea-weeds,
And build tiny castles of sand ;
They pick up the beautiful sea-shells, —
Fairy barks that have drifted to land.
They wave from the tall, rocking tree-tops
Where the oriole's hammock-nest swings ;
And at night-time are folded in slumber
By a song that a fond mother sings.

Those who toil bravely are strongest ;
  The humble and poor become great ;
And so from these brown-handed children
  Shall grow mighty rulers of state.
The pen of the author and statesman, —
  The noble and wise of the land, —
The sword, and the chisel, and palette,
  Shall be held in the little brown hand.

— *M. H. Krout*

HYMNS.

HYMNS.

MOTHER'S HYMN.

There sitteth a dove so white and fair,
All on the lily spray,
And she listeneth how to Jesus Christ
The little children pray.

Lightly she spreads her friendly wings,
And to heaven's gate hath sped,
And unto the Father in heaven she bears
The prayers which the children have said.

And back she comes from heaven's gate,
And she brings, that dove so mild,
From the Father in heaven, who hears her speak,
A blessing on every child.

Then, children, lift up a pious prayer!
It hears whatever you say;
That heavenly dove so white and fair,
All on the lily spray. — *From the Swedish.*

THE NEAREST FRIEND.

Dear Jesus! ever at my side,
How loving must Thou be,
To leave Thy home in heaven, to guard
A little child like me.

Thy beautiful and shining face
I see not, though so near ;
The sweetness of Thy soft, low voice
I am too deaf to hear.

I cannot feel Thee touch my hand,
With pressure light and mild,
To check me, as my mother did
When I was but a child.

But I have felt Thee in my thoughts,
Fighting with sin for me ;
And when my heart loves God, I know
The sweetness is from Thee.

Yes ! when I pray, Thou prayest too,
Thy prayer is all for me ;
But when I sleep, Thou sleepest not,
But watchest patiently.

— *F. W. Faber.*

A MOTHER'S MORNING PRAYER.

Up to me sweet childhood looketh,
Heart, and mind, and soul awake ;
Teach me of Thy ways, O Father !
For sweet childhood's sake.

In their young hearts, soft and tender,
Guide my hand good seed to sow,
That its blossoming may praise Thee,
Wheresoe'er they go.

Give to me a cheerful spirit,
That my little flock may see
It is good and pleasant service
To be taught of Thee.

Father, order all my footsteps ;
So direct my daily way,
That, in following me, the children
May not go astray.

Let Thy holy counsel lead me ;
Let Thy light before me shine ;
That they may not stumble over,
Word or deed of mine.

Draw us hand in hand to Jesus,
For His word's sake, unforgot, —
"Let the little ones come to me,
And forbid them not."

HYMN OF A CHILD.

Loving Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child !

Make me gentle as Thou art,
Come and live within my heart.

Take my childish hand in thine,
Guide these little feet of mine.

So shall all my happy days
Sing their pleasant song of praise ;

And the world shall always see
Christ, the holy Child, in me !

— *Abridged from C. Wesley.*

AN EVENING PRAYER.

Before I close my eyes in sleep,
Lord, hear my evening prayer,
And deign a helpless child to keep
With Thy protecting care.

Though young in years, I have been taught
Thy name to love and fear;
Of Thee to think with solemn thought,
Thy goodness to revere.

That goodness gives each simple flower
Its scent and beauty too,
And feeds it in night's darkest hour
With heaven's refreshing dew.

Nor will Thy mercy less delight
The infant's God to be,
Who, through the darkness of the night,
For safety trusts to Thee.

The little birds that sing all day
In many a leafy wood,
By Thee are clothed with plumage gay,
By Thee supplied with food.

And when at night they cease to sing,
By Thee protected still,
Their young ones sleep beneath their wing
Secure from every ill.

Thus may'st Thou guard with gracious arm
The bed whereon I lie,
And keep a child from every harm
By Thy all-watchful eye.

Each little flower that opens,
  Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
  He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
  The river, running by,
The morning, and the sunset
  That lighteth up the sky.

The tall trees in the greenwood,
  The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
  He made them every one.

He gave us eyes to see them,
  And lips that we might tell,
How great is God Almighty,
  Who hath made all things well.

—*Mrs. C. F. Alexander.*

FALLING TO SLEEP.

Evening is falling to sleep in the west,
Lulling the golden-brown meadows to rest;
Twinkle like diamonds the stars in the skies,
Greeting the two little slumbering eyes
  Sweetly sleep; Jesus doth keep;
  And Jesus will give His beloved ones sleep.

Now all the flowers have gone to repose,
Closed are the sweet cups of lily and rose;
Blossoms rocked lightly on evening's mild breeze,
Drowsily, dreamily swinging the trees.
  Sweetly sleep; Jesus doth keep;
  And Jesus will give His beloved ones sleep.

Sleep till the flowers shall open once more ;
Sleep till the lark in the morning shall soar ;
Sleep till the morning sun lighting the skies,
Bids thee from sweet repose joyfully rise.
Sweetly sleep ; Jesus doth keep ;
And Jesus will give His beloved ones sleep.

— *From the German.*

THE GOD OF MY CHILDHOOD.

O God ! who wert my childhood's love,
My boyhood's pure delight,
A presence felt the livelong day,
A welcome fear at night.

They bade me call Thee, Father, Lord !
Sweet was the freedom deemed.
And yet more like a mother's ways
Thy quiet mercies seemed.

I could not sleep unless Thy hand
Were underneath my head,
That I might kiss it if I lay
Wakeful upon my bed.

And quite alone I never felt ; —
I knew that Thou wert near, —
A silence tingling in the room ;
A strangely pleasant fear.

I know not what I thought of Thee ;
What picture I had made
Of that Eternal Majesty
To whom my childhood prayed.

I know I used to lie awake
And tremble at the shape
Of my own thoughts, yet did not wish
Thy terrors to escape.

With age Thou grewest more divine,
More glorious than before ;
I feared Thee with a deeper fear
Because I loved Thee more.

Thou broadenest out with every year
Each breadth of life to meet.
I scarce can think thou art the same,
Thou art so much more sweet.

Father ! what hast thou grown to now ?
A joy all joys above.
Something more sacred than a fear,
More tender than a love.

With gentle swiftness lead me on,
Dear God ! to see thy face.
And meanwhile in my narrow heart
O make Thyself more space !

—*F. W. Faber.*